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LETTER
From The Editor-In-Chief

My wife and I recently purchased a house with heavy smoke damage from the previous owner's irrepressible cigarette habit. This meant we had to prime and paint every wall and ceiling to eliminate the stains and odor. With so much painting ahead of us, we were pleased to see some of our friends and family members show up to help.

Here's the catch: After one of our volunteers completed the second coat in the den and went home for the day, I inspected the finish. And it was bad news. I had made the assumption that the worker in question knew what they were doing, but based on the dry-hardened paint runs scattered all over the walls—every few feet—she evidently could have used a few pointers. It took me several hours to sand down the paint runs, which often stripped the finish back to bare wallboard. Then I had to re-prime and paint all the sanded areas. To sum it up, it would have taken much less time for me to correctly prime and paint the room myself than it did to repair the damage done by our volunteer helper.

What complicated this situation further was the fact that this worker's heart was very much in the right place, and she truly, enthusiastically wanted to assist us. And she was planning to return for further painting. Obviously, this posed a conundrum. How do you relieve someone of "duty" when they're working on a non-paid volunteer basis? How do you criticize someone's craftsmanship when they're spending their free time working on your house? To do so would have seemed ungrateful and probably even insulting.

Luckily, I had an escape plan. Our volunteer was leaving for a three-day vacation the day after I was repairing the den walls, but she assured us that on returning she'd be back to help renovate. The wife and I devised a plan to work double-time for those three days and paint everything in the house before our help arrived. It turned out to be a long and tiring weekend, but we completed the chore. When the help returned, we could gladly explain that the job was done and her labor was no longer required, yet we were incredibly grateful for all her hard work. And nobody's feelings were hurt.

I learned a lesson. Keep an eye on your help, even if they're of the volunteer variety. If you notice problems with their craftsmanship, then graciously suggest tips and techniques to help them work properly before any damage is done. They'll benefit from the instruction, and you won't have to make repairs. Because, although free labor sounds nice, sometimes you get what you pay for.

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Q: *Our household plumbing is having drainage problems, and I'm not sure why. How do you determine if the problem is the septic tank and not the drainage lines?*

A: You must open the tank. Septic tanks are partitioned. The inlet side is intended to capture and hold most of the waste during the decomposition stage—it floats, decomposes, and then the remaining solids are left to settle to the bottom. These solids must periodically be cleaned out (recommended by septic tank guys every 4 to 5 years). The remaining liquid soup on the inlet side migrates through an opening in the partition at mid-height of the tank into the outlet side. The mid-height opening is supposed to prevent the floating and bottom-dwelling solids from migrating to the outlet side. If the tank has filled above the outlet to the field lines, there is probably a field line blockage. Usually this will be accompanied by seepage to ground surface between the tank outlet and the blockage, resulting in stinky wet spots in the yard. Seldom is the tank the source of the problem unless it has not been cleaned in a long time. Theoretically, excessive tank sludge could be hindering the overflow into the outlet side and into the field lines. If the field line outlet is open, the inlet side of the tank may be "oversludged," and a cleanout may solve the problem (and cost much less than a field line job). All the above assumes there is no blockage between the house and the tank.

……

Q: *My ceiling fan is only 3 months old but has developed a constant rattle. I think the problem is with screws that wiggle loose around the globe. Every time I tighten them the rattle soon comes back.*

A: The very nature of a ceiling fan is to rotate and thus vibrate, which can loosen the screws. To reduce the rattling, remove the light shade or "globe, and wrap a wide rubber band around the neck of the shade where the screws grip it. The rubber band will act as a shock absorber for the vibration. It also helps prevent the screws from loosening and dampens the unwanted noise.

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Q&A

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Q: *We have an expensive lawn chair that my son managed to break. It's a cast metal chair, and the hand rest is broken away from the connecting chair leg. It turns out that once the chair was broken, the armrest and leg no longer wanted to line up, and trying to clamp them back together put a lot of tension on the repair connection. I did make a temporary repair with some J.B. Weld, but it was very difficult to reposition the armrest/leg, and required some heavy clamps to join the pieces securely. Still, after about a week, the repair broke again when moving the chair to a new location, and I'm sure it was due to the lateral tension at the repair joint. What else can I try to salvage the chair?*

A: The J.B. Weld epoxy is strong stuff, but it can fail when two pieces of metal are under stress to pull away from each other. Try using a kind of splint in conjunction with the J.B. Weld. If it's a solid cast chair then there is probably enough material to drill a small hole in the broken area of both the leg and the armrest. Insert a metal rod halfway into the hole in the chair leg. Then thread the hole in the armrest over the protruding rod, just like making a dowel connection in woodworking. Reapply more J.B. Weld to the connection, and clamp the pieces tightly. Allow it to dry completely. With any luck, the steel rod will brace the connection from the stress that wants to pull the chair apart and allow the epoxy to do its job.

……

Q: *We bought a house with an automatic garage door opener. But the door never opens far enough. Is it broken, or can I adjust it somehow?*

A: It sounds like you simply need to adjust the travel on the door opener. Some manufacturers place two setscrews at either the side or rear of the motor. Other manufacturers include knobs on the bottom to adjust the travel. And certain units have trip levers on the travel bar that can be repositioned. These are all methods to adjust travel setting, and if you're confused about your particular model, refer to the manufacturer's instructions. **EHT**

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Fixed-base routers are ideal for edging. Plunge routers can cut grooves in the center of a work piece. Router combination kits from companies such as Skil, come with both a fixed base (shown) and a plunge base to take advantage of both styles.

By Matt Weber

From cabinet making to creating custom trim, routers are among the most sophisticated woodworking machines in carpentry. Handheld routers, both plunge-style and fixed-base, are popular among both professionals and DIY'ers for their ease of use and wide versatility. Whether you're rounding over or hunting rabbets, an electric router can shape the wood just like you want.

You'll find both pros and cons to the two main types of router: fixed-base and plunge style. A fixed-base router has the tool's base plate attached in a fixed position to the motor, which is a great setup for cutting a profile in the edge of a board, as well as any application where the tool cuts from outside toward the board. Although somewhat limited in use, fixed-base models have less moveable parts than plunge routers, which sometimes makes them easier to use in conjunction with accessory guide bushings. Smaller trim routers take advantage of the fixed-base design to cut down on tool weight, which makes them easier to maneuver.

In general, plunge routers can do everything a fixed-base can do, and more. The motor and cutter head slide along guide bars attached to the base. Plunge routers can begin the cut in the center of a piece of wood, where the router bit is lowered or "plunged" into the work piece. The plunging action makes the tools suitable for routing mortises and cut-outs in the center of stock. Plus, a plunge router can be used as a fixed-base router by simply locking the motor in the desired position along the plunge bars. However, plunge routers are usually more expensive and heavier than fixed-base models, and some plunge routers can be difficult to adjust when upside-down in a router table.

Variable speed control is a common feature among plunge routers, and on certain fixed-base models. Variable speed allows you to adapt cutting speed to the wood and router bit, and it keeps the speed consistent even when cutting fast into the grain. This prevents burning the edge of the wood when cutting across the grain at a low feed rate.

One of the newer advances in router design is the combination kit, which includes a single motor with two detachable bases. Available from companies such as Skil and Bosch, router combo kits offer advantages of each base design; just pop on the fixed base for edging, or use the plunge base for grooving inside the work piece.

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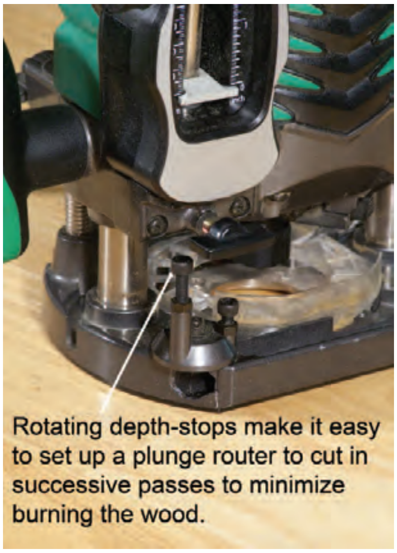
When it comes to choosing a router, bigger isn't always better. As with most any power tool, the larger machines produce more power and cutting capacity, but the extra girth and weight can be a problem on intricate jobs that require a steady, delicate touch. On the other hand, small trim routers won't have the power to tackle heavy-duty chores like stair building and pattern cutting. Router sizes can be broken down into three groups: less than 1-horsepower; up to 2-1/4 horsepower; and over 2-1/4 horsepower.

The smallest routers, called trim routers, have a cutting-speed advantage over a regular router. The bit rotates faster, the compact size translates into greater precision on small jobs, and many trim routers can even be used one-handed. These units are ideal for edging plastic laminate, as well as basic groove and cutting work.


Rotating depth-stops make it easy to set up a plunge router to cut in successive passes to minimize burning the wood.

The motor of plunge routers moves along guide bars to lower the cutter into the surface of the work piece. The heavy-duty 3-1/4-peak horsepower Hitachi M12V2 Router shown has plenty of muscle to operate large cutters with 1/2-inch shanks for deeper cuts in fewer passes.

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the main advantages of the jump in power is that the motor can drive router bits of larger shank sizes, from smaller 1/4-inch bits to the larger 1/2-inch size. The thicker shank size of the bit gives it more rigidity so the cutter head can be manufactured in a larger size. The larger bits allow a deeper cut in a single pass, and you'll also find a broader selection of profiles among larger bits. Router bits are also available in metric shank sizes, the most common being 6, 8 and 12 millimeter.

The largest handheld routers hover around the 3-1/4-horsepower mark and these high-production units can cut fast and hard. These big routers can easily power the largest specialty bits for tough chores such as milling

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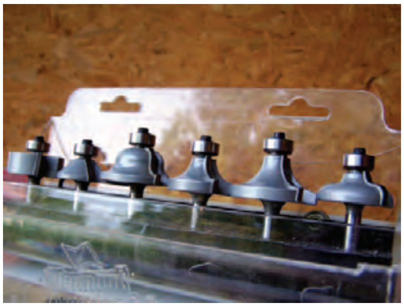
frame-and-panel doors. The big motors are also suited for professional—meaning continuous—use. This means they're very durable, but high-priced to match.

The style of the base and handle offer more design choices. Handle styles vary from double doorknob handles to D-style handles and pistol-grip handles for easy edge trimming. Choice in handle style simply boils down to personal preference.

As far as base plates, some have a round shape while others have combined straight and circular edges. The straight edge allows working closer to a vertical obstruction. For use in a router table, it's also important that the base has threaded sockets through which to mount the inverted router.



Edge-routing bits have a ball-bearing guide to ride along the edge of the work piece for an even, consistent cut.

Bits with 1/2-inch shanks can support large cutting heads for tough jobs such as milling frame-and-panel doors.

BITS AND PIECES

You can split router bits into two categories: edge routing and groove routing. With the help of ball-bearing guides, various edge bits can round-over a stair tread, cut a rabbet on the edge of a cabinet case, rout a decorative ogee in custom trim, or bevel the edge of a shelf with a chamfer bit.

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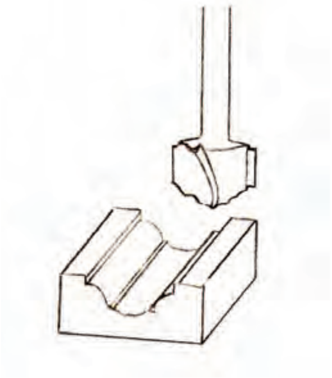
With no guide bearing in place, groove routing bits can cut inside the field of the work piece. For example, cut a mortise with a straight flue bit, or cut dovetail joints with an inverted V-shaped bit.

Most router bits are manufactured from high-speed steel (HSS), some are coated with titanium nitride to reduce friction and heat, but the best are tungsten carbide tipped (TCT) for longer cutting life. The HSS bits work well for softwoods and are much less expensive than the TCT bits, but they won't last nearly as long. The harder TCT bits are necessary to cut hardwoods, plywood and other engineered wood panels.

When selecting bits, you'll also come across spiral bits. The spiral cutters are designed to rout woods that tend to splinter a lot. The cutting edge of spiral upcut bits pulls the chips up and away from the work piece. With spiral downcut bits, the downward shearing action helps achieve a chip-free surface on chip-prone materials.

As far as router accessories, make sure the router has a fine-adjustment device that allows you to alter the cutting depth by just a hair if necessary. A guide fence is also a handy item, which works just like a ripping gauge for a circular saw. The fence helps to hold the router on a straight path while making grooves or rabbets parallel to the edge of the wood. A good fence should be constructed of metal and attach to the base plate with rods and lock screws. A dust-extraction port is another handy feature, allowing you to hook up the hose of a shop vacuum to keep the worksite cleaner.



Plunge bits have no ball-bearing guide, so they can cut grooves, mortises and more, right on the face of the stock.

For routing templates, one of the most important components of a router is the guide bushing system. The guide bush serves as a spacer between the cutter and a template for grooving and edge trimming.

An edge guide is an excellent accessory for routing parallel to the edge of the work piece.

The guide bush is basically a lipped collar screwed onto the router base over the bit. There are a variety of lip diameters to match different bit diameters. The general rule is to leave 1/8 inch of space between the cutting edge and the lip. The guide bush rides along the outer edge of your template (attached to the top of a work piece with double-sided tape),

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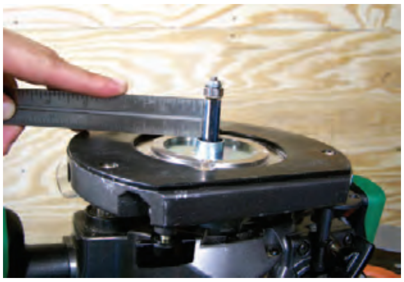
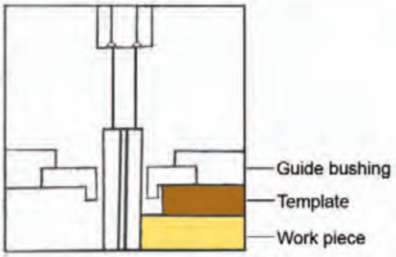
while the cutter copies the profile on the work piece.

Lastly, the use of a router table can convert your router into a miniature molding machine. You can fix the position and height of the cutting bit and pass stock through the cutter against a fence or jig, rather than running the router over the stock. The table gives the user an unobstructed view of the work, and makes it possible to rout small, intricate pieces where a router would otherwise be awkward to push over the stock. **EHT**



A guide bushing rides along the outer edge of a template (attached to top of work piece with double-sided tape), while the cutter copies the profile on the work piece. The general rule is to leave 1/8 inch of space between the cutting edge and the lip of the bushing.



With a router table you can fix the position and height of the cutting bit to pass stock through the cutter against a fence or jig, rather than running the router over the stock. The model shown is the Portamate PM7010 Router Table, which has an offset T-slot fence, a miter gauge and fingerboard accessories.

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Wood Handle Replacement for Striking Tools

Wood handles often break from wear, but just as frequently from striking errors.

By Charlie Self

When we look around today, many—maybe most—tool handles available are made from something other than wood. As a rule, if you bend or break a steel handle, you can immediately discard the tool. However, such breakage is nearly impossible under most conditions of use.

Wood handles do break much more often, sometimes from no more than wear, but just as frequently from striking errors.

For claw and ball-peen hammers, handle replacement is usually quick and easy. For larger striking tools, a bit more effort may be needed, but not much. It's not as much fun as watching a good ball game, but it isn't a lot of difficult work, either.

TOOLS YOU NEED

When replacing a broken handle, you're going to spend an hour or less, from start to finish. You'll need a drill and a twist drill bit (a 1/4-inch is just about right), possibly a sander, or a Stanley Surform tool or wood rasp to slightly reshape the handle for a good fit in the eye. You'll need another hammer to tap the wedge into place, a soft-faced hammer to tap the handle in place, and that's about it. Use a power drill to get the old handle out of the eye. For most handles, including sledge size, a 1/4-inch or 5/16-inch twist-point, metal boring bit is preferable. Don't use a wood-boring bit like a brad point or Forstner. You will hit the sides of the eye, which will ruin either bit almost immediately. Too, there's almost always one or two metal wedges that pin the wooden wedge in place. A couple of flea market chisels—battered chisels usually available for half a buck at flea markets around the country—help, first in removing the handle, and second, in opening up the wedge slot in the new handle.

In difficult cases, a rat tail file cleans out the eye nicely, but usually a bit of clean up with either emery cloth or sandpaper does the job. The soft-faced hammer isn't needed if you use a chunk of wood on the handle being driven, hitting the wood, instead of the handle, with a steel hammer. I prefer to use a 2-pound Vaughan copper/rawhide-faced hammer for this kind of work.

SIZING THE CORRECT HANDLE

The first step is to examine the handle eye to determine its shape. There are basically two shapes, but a lot of sizes. Oval eyes are most common, and the most variable in size. Axe eyes are found on axes and on some

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splitting mauls, but seldom elsewhere. If you're at all unsure about the eye type or size, remove the handle and use the head of the tool to check against the new handle size and shape.

Measure the handle length. Most carpenter's (claw) and mechanic's (ball peen) hammers from 20-ounce head weight or less, use a 15-inch long handle. When head weight hits 22 or 24 ounces, handle length grows.

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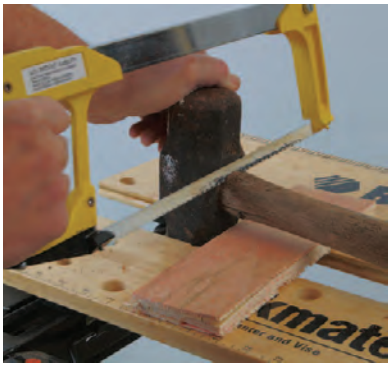
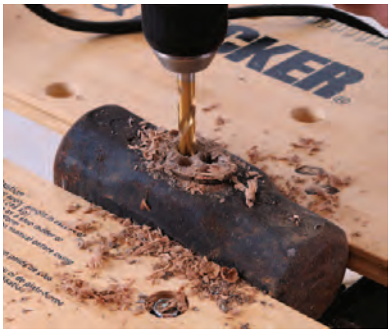
You may find it more difficult to find a handle the correct size and shape than it is to remove the old handle bits and install the new one. Stores simply don't carry the selection of sizes that we could once find, partly because wood-handled tools are not in high demand any more, and partly because Chinese replacement hammers are often about the same price as the new handles. Some hardware stores have them, most farm supply stores have them, and maybe a few other places. If you have American-made striking tools and want to keep them in good working order, you'll find the search well worthwhile.

FITTING A WOOD HANDLE FOR STRIKING TOOLS

Start first by removing the old handle. Saw off the handle as close to the bottom of the eye as you can. Because it is close to the metal eye, use a hacksaw or a jab saw with a disposable blade.

Drill out the waste inside the tool eye. I used a corded drill for the job. Almost any drill does as well, if it has the power to bore through hardwood that may be 2 inches thick with metal inserts. The tool head must be held firmly, especially smaller hammer heads





that love to spin around the bit when loose.

Use the drill bit to cut three holes, forming a cloverleaf shape. Next, remove the webs between the "leaves" of the clover shape. Use a flea market chisel to knock those out. Then use a piece of dowel, placed on top of the handle in the head, to drive out the remains.

Clean the head using emery

cloth, and check closely (any 3x or 4x magnifying glass works). Look for cracks, especially around the eye, that weaken the eye and make the tool dangerous to use. If you find any cracks at all here, discard the tool. Minor chipping and rust probably means nothing. We chucked a wire brush in the Bosch drill and used that for final head cleanup.

Hold the handle up to the head to check shape and fit. Slightly large is OK; slightly small is OK. Far too large or far too small means you need to return the handle and find the proper size. Correctly sized wedges force the eye contact when there is a minor size difference, but the wood only spreads so far before it's weakened.

When the handle is far too large for the eye, fitting it may weaken the wood. A good fit at the outset is the way to go. Use your sandpaper, wood rasp, or

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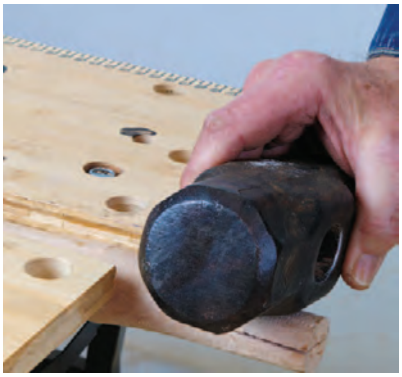
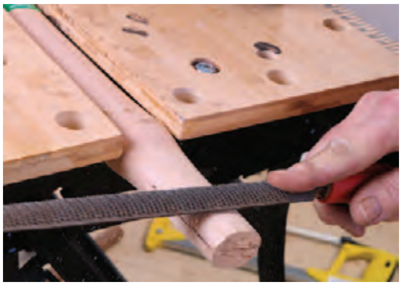


Surform to shape the insert section of the handle as needed, testing the fit every few strokes or scrapes. Using your hands, push the handle into the eye until it goes past halfway.

Insert the fitted handle into the eye. The best fit needs a soft-faced hammer to drive the new handle into the eye.



You do not want to remove the handle from the eye after this insert, though it can be done if things aren't perfect (you'll need your dowel again if you do). The handle on the top of the tool is a bit too long at this point. Support it well, and saw off any extra material (this step can be left until after wedging, if the extra length is 1/4 inch or less).

WEDGE IT

Another flea market chisel is useful here, to open up the slot for the wooden wedge. Try to use one that is just about the full length of the head's eye. Again, emphasize the flea market chisel here. You don't want to use a finely tuned, excellent chisel for this job.

Select a wedge for size, and place its smaller end in the wedge slot in the handle eye end. Slowly tap the wedge into place. There are different arguments about which wedge is

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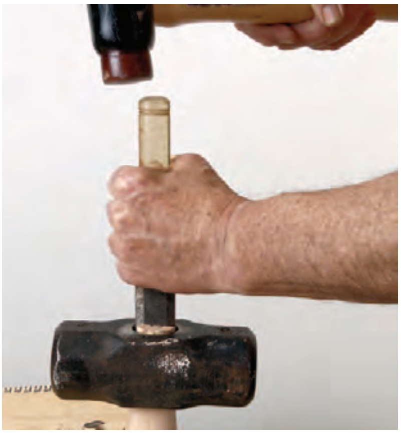
better; metal wedges or wood wedges. Steel wedges do crush and tear internal wood fibers as they go in, whereas wood pushes them apart. Wood is a touch harder to drive well, tending to split. Either way, starting with a good fit helps the handle stay put for a good, long time. Usage usually dictates dual wedges; that's the way most handles are packed, with one large wood wedge and one or two smaller metal wedges. The wedges are also available individually in hardware stores.



The best way to begin is to use a wooden wedge first. Drive it in and let it sit. Saw it, and any extra handle length, off. Let wood wedges extend beyond the top of the eye a bit more than the handle itself extends. Trim them flush with the top of the eye at the same time you trim the

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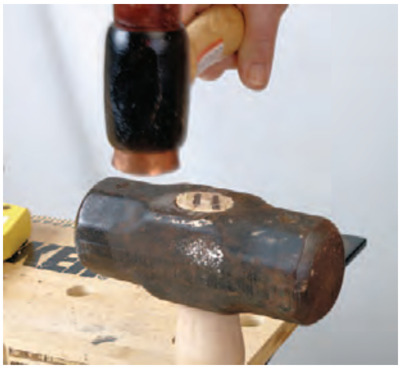


handle. Then drive a steel wedge at near right angles to the wood wedge. This serves as a lock for both wedges and keeps the handle tight longer.

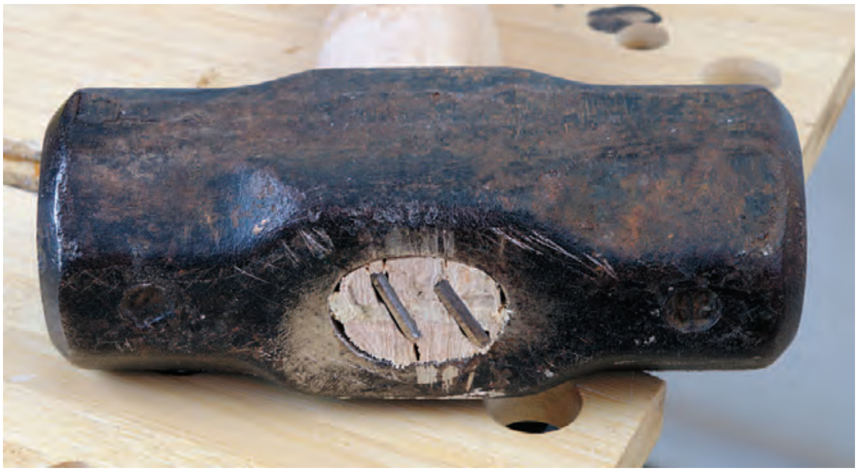
Recent reading suggests standing a handle, eye down, in a pan of linseed oil, overnight, causes the wood to swell. Wood swells because it absorbs moisture all right, but in the form of water, not linseed oil. You can stand the striking tool head in a pan of linseed oil and let it soak overnight as well. The linseed oil doesn't harm the head's metal, but does help (a little) protect the raw parts of the wood handle. Remove, wipe, let dry and use. You can go ahead and use the tool immediately after wedging and trimming, too.

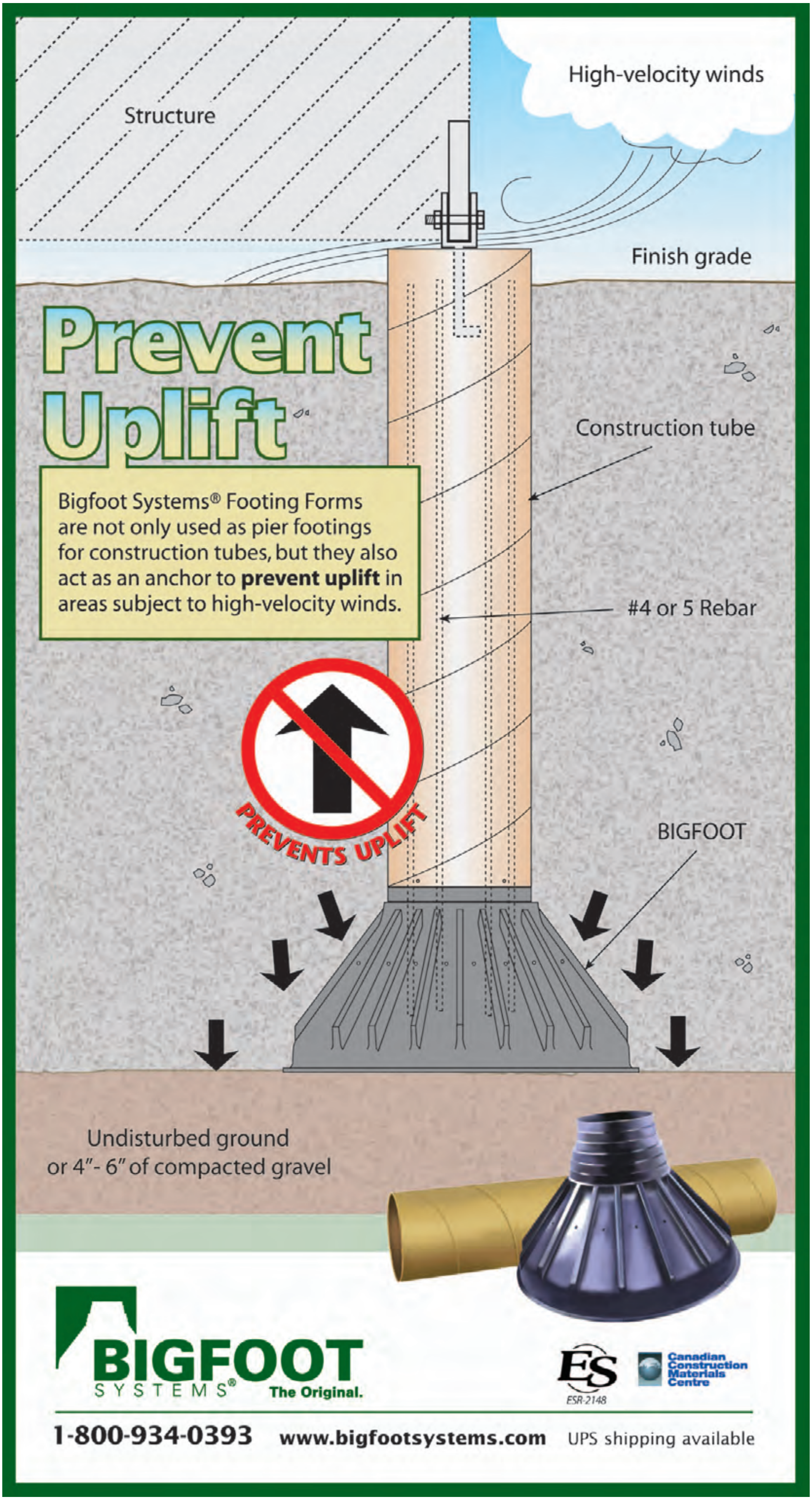
Fiberglass handles are easier to replace. Make absolutely sure the head is cleaned out, much cleaner than with a wood handle: Simply use the emery cloth for longer, until bright metal is showing. Then, check the new handle for fit.

Fiberglass handles come with a packet of epoxy. Once removal and clean-up is done, follow the packet instructions carefully. There really should be no trimming needed to get a side-to-side fit. You may have to trim the length a bit.

SLOWING THE NEXT FAILURE

The failure of heavier striking tool handles is often caused by over-strike, where the head misses the mark and the handle hits it, either damaging the handle or snapping it off completely. Wood handles can last many times longer with a simple sleeve shoved up against the head. Handle savers (there is an Original Handle Saver, one that was easy to find in a farm supply store) are a great help with larger striking tools, axes, sledges and splitting mauls. Find a piece of dense rubber, for a sledge or splitting maul, and use duct tape to wrap and hold it on the handle, just under the head. If nothing else is available, make a pad of duct tape and then wrap that in place. It will do for the time being. **EHT**

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- Ensure you are placing the footing form on solid ground. The more solid the ground the less likely movement will occur.
- Install your footings 4-6 inches below the frost line to avoid potential movement. If you are in an area without frost, the footing form should be placed two feet in the ground and then backfilled to hold it in place when it is being filled with concrete.
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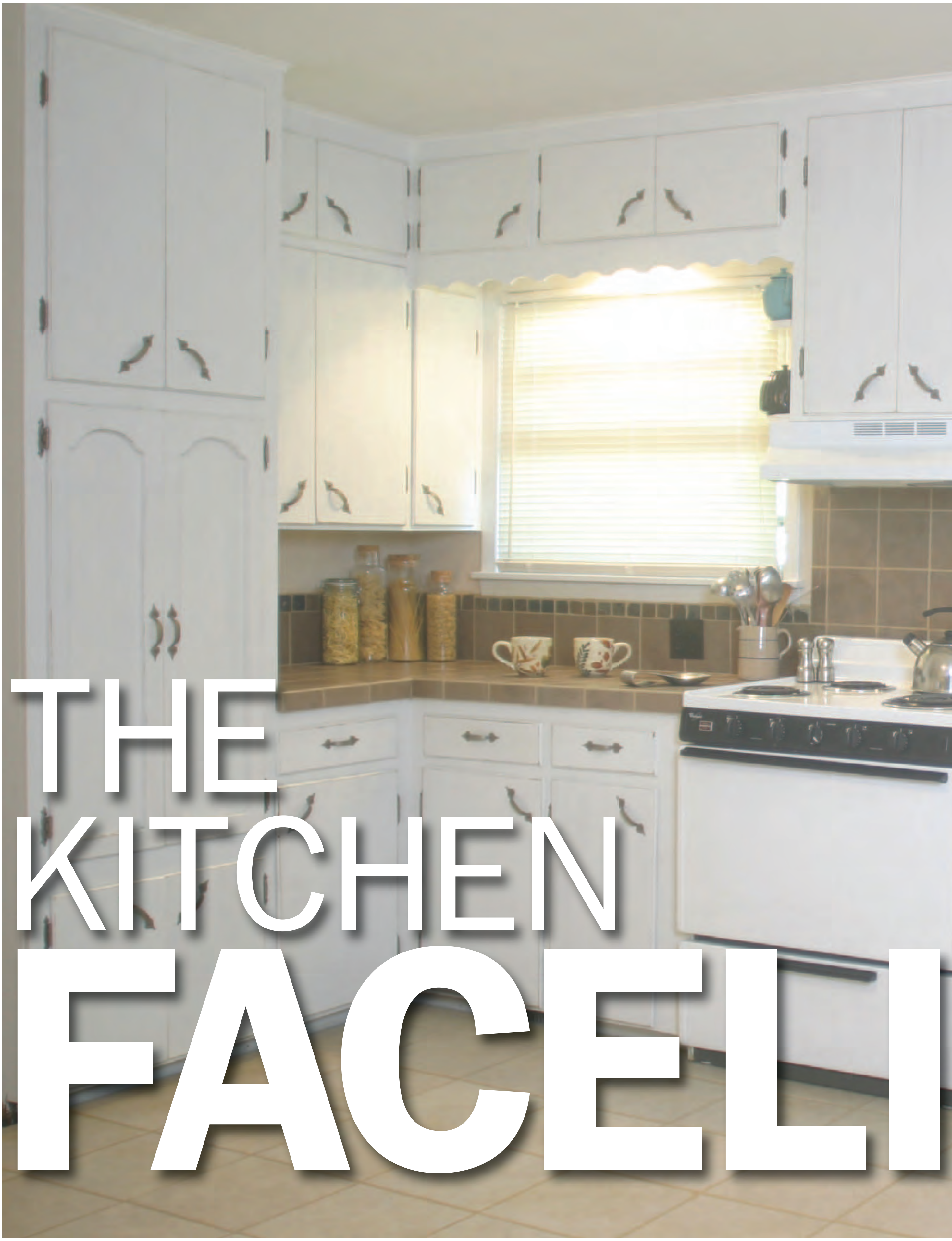

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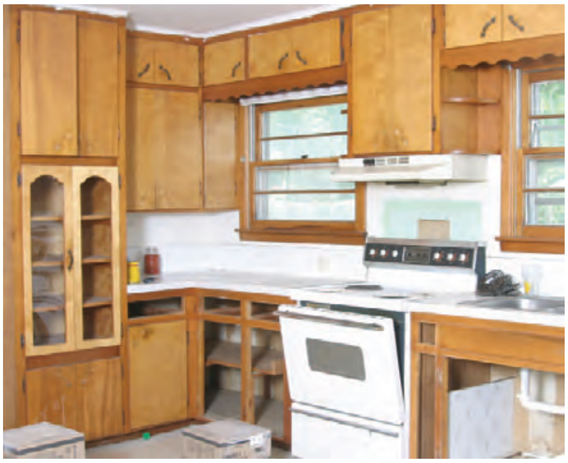
From painting and cabinet repair to new floors and countertops.

By Monte Burch

THE KITCHEN FACELIFT



This "before" photo shows a fixer-upper, former rental house with problems. The renter started to remodel, but quit in the middle of it. The cabinets in the kitchen shown were custom made in the 60's, are still extremely sturdy but dated.

First step is to remove the old doors and drawers.

Regardless of whether working on a fixer-upper, getting your present home ready to sell, or renovating a rental property, a kitchen redo is one of the most important and popular remodeling jobs. As any real estate dealer will tell you, a kitchen can sell or prevent the sale of a home.

The kitchen shown is in a typical 60's ranch style home with hand-built cabinets in place. Not all of these home-built cabinetry jobs were all that great, and in some instances, you may want to replace them with newer component cabinets. That can be a great cost, and these days $20,000 to remodel a kitchen isn't unusual. The cabinets in this home, however, were extremely well made, and hadn't deteriorated to the point of removing. The owners wanted to renovate the former rental home to sell, yet keep the cost in line with surrounding homes. As a remodeler, builder and former cabinet maker, I took on the task, with help from my family. Actually, more help from the family intended, as I had a back injury in the middle of the job. But here we go with some "on-the-cheap" but at the same time, upscale kitchen renovating. We also recycled as much as possible and used a number of "green" products.

CLEANING & PAINTING

The first task is cleaning, and it can be a major task. This is especially so with rental houses. Use the strongest stuff you can tolerate, and be careful. My nephew of Morgan's Renovations, who has worked on numerous rental house redo's and with me on several *Extreme How-To* projects, has discovered dirty needles in toilets, down kitchen drains and other places you definitely don't want to stick your unprotected hands. And as he says, the world's worst places are under the sink and behind the toilet. "These places are always going to have water problems—I really hate that in rental-house situations." Mold can also be a problem, especially in homes that haven't had much care. A product, such as Mold Control, from www.cureyourmold.com can help solve that problem.

The ceiling was then patched with spackle and painted with ceiling white. The next step in the project shown was to paint the old pine, yellowed cabinetry in a modern scheme. We removed all cabinet doors and drawers. All were of solid wood, with 1/2-inch drawer sides and even solid wood 1/4-inch bottoms. Hey, we're keeping all of this stuff.

After cleaning and sanding and a couple of gallons of Kilz later, we're about to seal off problem areas and provide a good base

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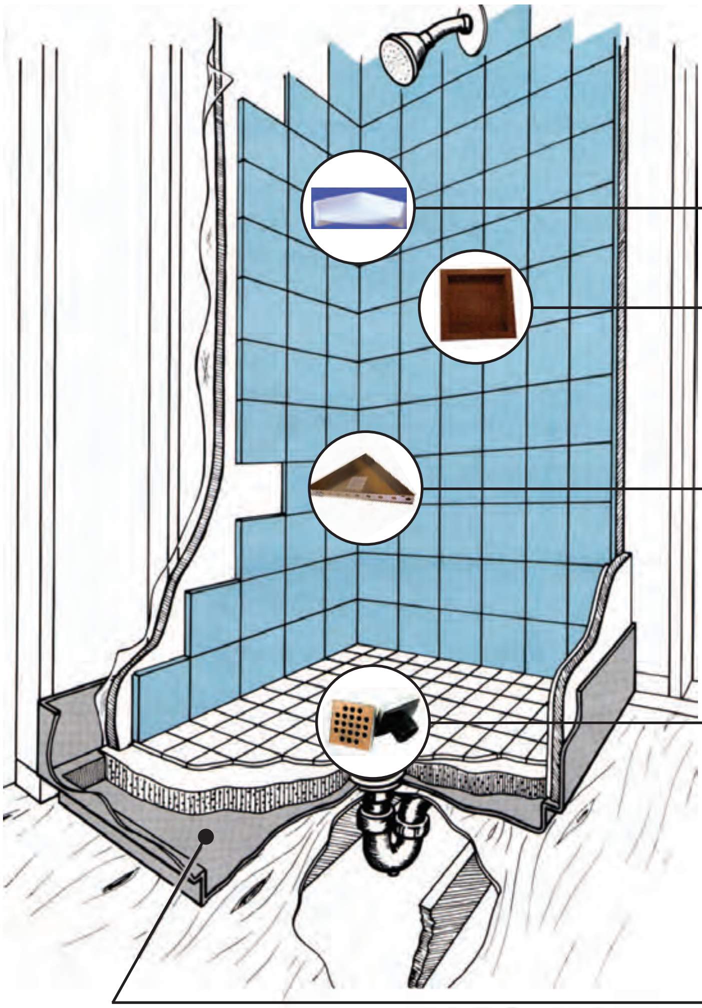

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THE KITCHEN FACELIFT

The cabinet frames are cleaned with household cleaner, and then lightly sanded to scuff the varnished surface.

for a paint coat on both the cabinet framework and the doors and drawers. We had tested, using only the paint, on a couple of drawers, and the old stains, finish and everything bled through. The cabinets were then painted in a latex semi-gloss wall and trim paint in white. After the cabinetry and trim were painted, the walls were also patched and painted. A Black & Decker Pro Electric Paint Roller makes rolling on the ceiling and wall paint quick, easy and less messy than the old roller/tray method. The Black & Decker Quick Paint Edge Painter really helped when painting the door and baseboard trim white and the walls nutmeg.

A coat of Kilz 2 Latex was painted on the cabinet framework, followed by two coats of white interior latex semi-gloss wall and trim paint, sanding between coats.

COUNTER CHECK

The old plastic laminate was removed from the countertops, using a wide chisel and flat pry bar. The plywood sub-base was in good shape, except in a few spots where pieces of wood had pulled off with the laminate. These were filled with wood putty and sanded smooth. There are always some problems in remodeling, and this was no exception. The original splash board was a piece of 3/4-inch plywood nailed to the studs, then the laminate applied. When we pulled off the laminate we found some big holes in the wallboard where electrical outlets had originally been planned but not installed. These holes were patched by tying a string to a nail, inserting the string through a piece of wallboard that would fit through the

The old plastic laminate, including the backsplash is removed from the countertop and back walls.

Damaged areas of the old plywood countertop base are filled in with wood patch.

hole. The wallboard piece is inserted into the hole and turned around until the front of it rests against the back edges of the hole. Holding the wallboard piece in place with the string, spackling compound is then used to mend the hole. After this has hardened, the string is cut off and the area sanded flush.

The old countertop had a slanting front piece. This was removed and a solid wood edging added with glue and finish nails set below the surface. The area was then sanded smooth.

The original countertop edge was cut in a kind of funky angled method. The plastic laminate-covered wooden angled edge pieces were removed and a straight wood strip added to all the cabinet top fronts, creating a 1-1/2-inch front edge. A matching bar with a rounded corner had a 3/4-inch edge protruding 3/4 inches. An additional 3/4-inch edge strip was glued and fastened in place. A cardboard pattern was made of the rounded corner and a piece of 3/4-inch plywood was cut to fit and glued and clamped in

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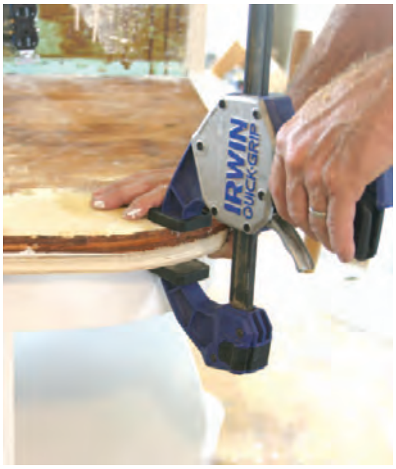

A bar portion of the cabinets had a single 3/4-inch edging. Another 3/4-inch piece was placed under the top to create a 1-1/2-inch edging to match the other cabinet tops. This included a rounded corner.

place with Titebond Type III glue.

NEW TILE SURFACE

The sink, the old dishwasher, vent and stove were removed. In most instances you also want to add cement board to the plywood sub-base, and you may have to remove any rotten areas that are water-damaged around the sink. The countertops and wall spaces between the countertop and upper cabinets were then tiled using 6-by-6-inch ceramic tile. We used several “green” products in the tile setting process, including Mapei Ultramastic ECO adhesive for the countertop and backsplash, Ultraflex2 Dust Free Professional tile mortar with polymer for the floor, and Opticolor Stain-Free Grout for the countertop, backsplash and floor. The Mapei website, www.mapei.com not only describes the products, but a handy calculator is also avail-

All edging was sanded smooth.

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able to assist in determining the amount of materials needed.

Mapei Ultramastic ECO, a Green Innovation, premium, solvent-free adhesive, for interior use over drywall, cement board, exterior grade plywood, concrete and masonry block was used as the countertop and backsplash adhesive. No mixing is required, it is easy to work, provides a non-slip surface for vertical use, and has a fairly long working time (30 to 40 minutes). The first step was to dry lay the countertop tile in place to determine placement, spacing and where tiles would need to be cut. We used TAVY two-sided tile spacers to space the tiles. These are extremely handy two-sided plastic spacers with a corner spacer on one side and a straight spacer on the other. They're placed over the tile, and easily removed after the tiles are set. We used 1/8-inch spacers on the countertop and backsplash and 1/4-inch spacers on the floor. Once the spacing is determined, the adhesive is applied with a notched trowel, creating an even setting bed, and the tile set in place, again using the spacers. Do not spread more adhesive than can be covered in 30 to 45 minutes. Set the tile with a slight twisting motion to assure a positive bond. Clean off any adhesive smudges from the face of the tiles immediately with water. Then wash hands and tools with water while the adhesive is still fresh. The backsplash was then tiled and finished off with decorative 2-inch tile squares cut from a 12-by-12-inch sheet of tiles.

Mapei Stain-Free Grout was used to grout both the countertops and the floor. In almost 40 years of building, remodeling and writing about it, this is one of the most interesting products I've used. Another Green Innovation product, the grout is stain-free and has better color uniformity

Then the plywood sub-surface and adjoining edges were all sanded smooth. In the case of a badly damaged plywood sub-base, or with most tile adhesives, cement board should be applied.

The countertop tile is dry-laid to lay out the pattern and determine where the cut tile will be. In this case the full tiles are laid next to the stove opening, leaving the cut tile at the end walls.

The adhesive, Mapei Ultramastic ECO is applied to the countertop using a serrated edge trowel.

Then the tiles set. TAVY two-sided tile spacers make it quick and easy to space the tile. They have two sides, one is a corner spacer, the opposite a straight spacer. They are placed over the top of the tile as you lay them, and then are easily removed.

Then the backsplash is set. This was finished off with 2-inch decorative tiles cut from a 12 x 12-inch sheet.

One of the best products used in the redo was Mapei Opticolor Stain-Free Grout. The grout comes in a kit including parts A and B, a scratch scrubber, sponge and rubber gloves. The dry grout, available in a variety of colors, comes in a separate bag. Small, medium and large kits are available.

MAPEI
Opticolor
Stain-Free Grout
C

and durability than cement grouts. And, no sealer is required. It is easy to maintain, will clean to the original color and contains BioBlock antimicrobial protection for mold and mildew resistance. The product is a reactive-resin grout and is non-sagging with no shrinkage. It comes in small, medium and large kits. The kits include a mixing bucket, part A and B liquids, a scratch scrubber, cleaning sponge and rubber gloves. The dry grout, available in a range of colors, comes in a separate bag. Summer Tan was the color used in the project shown.

MAPEI
Opticolor
Stain-Free Grout
A+B

The A and B liquid parts are first mixed using a drill-powered mixer at a slow speed of about 300 rpm.

The first step in grouting is to pour the liquid parts into the bucket and mix with a paddle in an electric drill at a slow speed of around 300 rpm. The dry powder is then mixed in until a uniform color is achieved. The application and clean-up period for the entire mixed batch of Opticolor should not exceed 45 to 60 minutes. Using a hard-rubber float with a sharp edge, force the Opticolor into the grout joints in a continuous manner. Fill the joints with the most grout possible. Leave the grout flush with the tile edge. Make sure all grout joints are well-compacted and free of voids/gaps. Thoroughly remove any excess grout from the tile face before the grout loses its plasticity or begins to set. This is most easily accomplished by holding the rubber float at a 90-degree angle to the tile surface and dragging the excess grout diagonally across the joints, leaving as little grout on the tile surface as possible. One of the major benefits of the product is it literally sticks like glue. It doesn't fall out of vertical joints and you can start cleaning immediately after application. The rubber gloves are in the kit for a reason. If you get any of the wet grout on your hands or body, it will wash off with soap and water, but is very sticky. I suggest you buy an extra package of rubber gloves for the chore.

The powder is then poured into the mixed liquid and again mixed at a slow speed until a uniform color mix is achieved.

To clean, apply a generous amount of cool water to the tile surface and scrub with the supplied white scrub pad. Use enough water with the scrub pad to loosen the grout film from the tile surface. Apply minimum pressure on the tile with the scrub pad in a circular motion to loosen the grout residue, simultaneously smoothing the grout joints without removing grout from the joints. To remove loosened grout residue, drag a clean sponge diagonally across the tile surface. Use one side of the sponge for each pass over the tile, rinsing the sponge following the second pass. Do

The grout is applied to the tile using a stiff-edged hard rubber float. The supplied scrub pad and water are immediately used to begin cleanup, followed with a soft sponge and lots of water.

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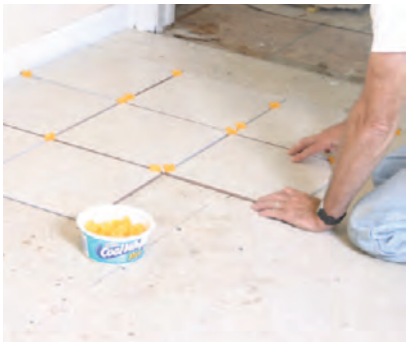
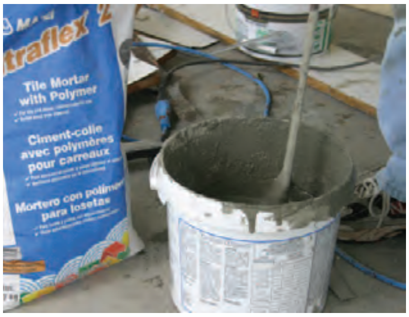
not allow excess water to remain on the tile surface as this will allow the formation of a grout film that may be difficult to remove once hardened. Change the cleaning water frequently to prevent putting residue back on the tile surface. Rinse the scrub pad and sponge frequently while cleaning. A final cleaning with water to which a bit of clear dishwashing soap has been added can be done in about an hour.

Actually we laid the floor tile, then came in and grouted the countertops, cleaned up the floor around the counter edges and followed by grouting the floor tile. We did this because we used the same grout and color for both floor and countertop and wanted to be prepared to use up each batch of mixed grout. The floor tile was set



Cement board is fastened to the floor, and a starting corner of tile is dry laid to establish the pattern.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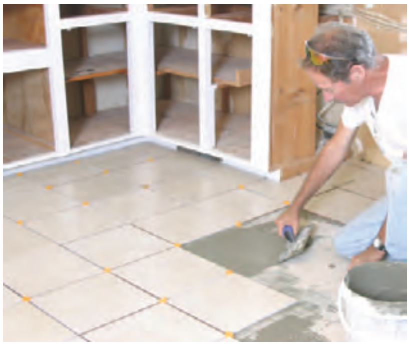

The mortar is applied using a notched trowel.

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CABINET & DOOR RX

While the countertop and floor adhesives were setting, we worked on the removed doors and drawers. We removed the hardware and did some minor door patching. The two doors under the sink had

Tile is set, using TAVY tile spacers, and the Opticolor grout is applied and cleaned.

The bottom edges of some of the plywood doors had separated. Titebond III glue was applied, wax paper was used to cover, wooden strips were used as cauls and the separations were clamped back together.

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water damage with some separation of the plywood plies. We solved the problem quite easily using Titebond III adhesive to glue the plies back together. A strip of waxed paper and a long strip of wood on both sides were clamped in place. A couple of doors had damaged corners. Mighty Putty (www.mightyputty.com) was used to build the corners back up. This is a fantastic product that can be used to solve a wide range of problems. The material comes shaped in a roll. Cut off the amount you need, knead it until it turns white, and then apply. After it sets, it can be sanded and shaped just like wood.

The old hardware was in good shape, but discolored, and in an old style copper color. After pricing new hardware, and finding the

A couple of doors had broken corners. These were easily patched using Mighty Putty.

The repaired doors and drawers were then sanded and shaped smooth.

The old hardware was cleaned with Birchwood Casey Gun Scrubber.

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THE KITCHEN FACELIFT

same hardware still available, we decided to recycle. The pulls and hinges were cleaned using Birchwood Casey Gun Scrubber, a quick-drying rust remover. The hardware was then spray painted with Rust-Oleum American Accents Satin Hammered bronze. To add a distinctive "antique" touch, the edges of the painted doors and drawers were lightly sanded down to the blond finish. The stainless steel sink was also cleaned and reinstalled, but with new faucets added. All that was left was to install a new dishwasher, stove and vent. Add a pair of blinds over the window and sit back and admire. EHT

Then the hardware was spray painted in a hammered bronze using Rust-Oleum American Accents paint.

The edges of the cabinet doors and drawers were lightly sanded down to the light wood for a modern "old" look.

The hardware was then installed on the painted doors and drawers.

The cabinets featured a pull-out cutting board. To rejuvenate, it was reglued, and the top was sanded down smooth and coated with salad bowl finish.

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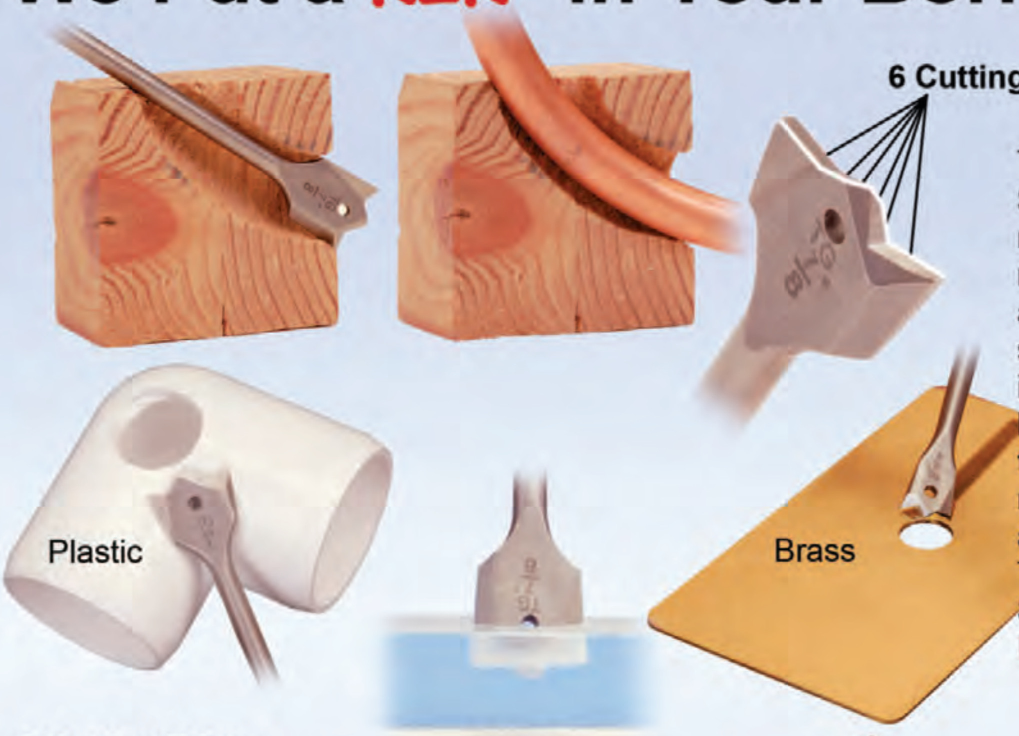

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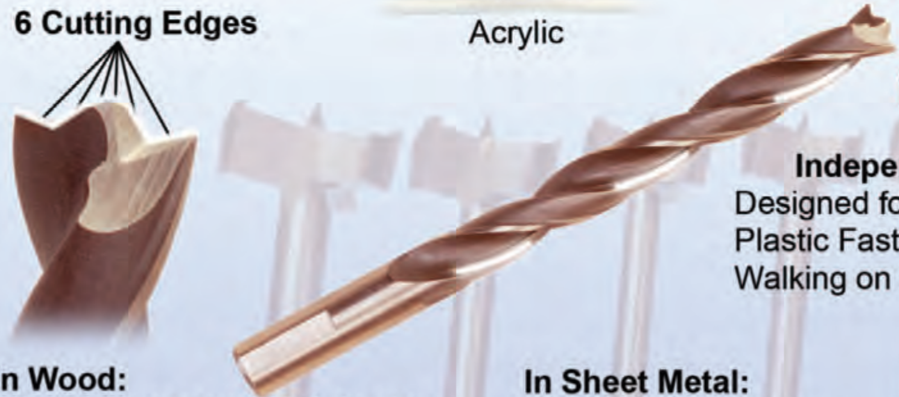

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MASTER SUITE MASTERPIECE

By Mark Clement and Theresa Coleman

Enhance a bedroom by creating custom built-in closets from stock cabinets.

To convert this un-cared for bedroom into a master suite, we had to junk all the horsehair plaster, crumbling lath and decrepit knob-and-tube wiring. We then stripped the structural walls of the house back to the block, installed new studs, updated electrical, insulation, HVAC chases, windows and drywall. Once back to a blank slate, we could connect all the dots and make it pretty.

As shown in this article, we finished and sanded the drywall, switched and plugged the roughed-in electrical, and ran nice, classic moldings. We also installed a wide-plank pine floor, painted and—the piece d'resistance of the entire project—used stock cabinets to create two custom built-in closets for the previously storage-free space.

They graciously contain all the things

typically stored in a bedroom, and smartly—not to mention affordably—solve a serious storage dilemma part-and-parcel to old and/or under-detailed houses. And it all ties together in a super-sweet package, faithful to the look and detail of an old house. Here's how we did it.

DESIGN

This is a room upgrade that relies heavily on the right design for the space—both for function and form—and here, necessity was the mother of beauty.

The 12-by-13-foot room, which would be a master bedroom when we were done, had no closet. Thanks to old house designers, that is roughly two fewer closets than a modern couple needs. That was the inspiration for the custom built-ins.

The core of the room would be two elegant and very customized storage systems that my co-remodeler Theresa designed, using stock cabinets from Thomasville cabinets. Using just about every page from their extensive catalogue, we pulled together a totally detailed, functional system that stores everything from shoes to gym bags to dirty clothes and everything in between. And it's all behind sweet raised-panel doors that close and hide just about any mess.

To make it all flow, we took a closet from an adjoining room, so one of the two built-in banks would live inside the new space.

To add to the overall look and feel, we spec'ed a nice, three-piece crown, tall base molding, pine floors and just the right color to tie it all together.

BANKS O' BUILT-INS

The built-ins are three towers, essentially, made with 24-inch deep kitchen cabinets (25 inches with the doors) ganged on top of and next to each other rising to 89-3/4 inches tall.

The left and right towers have drawer bases, an armoire as the center element and a hopper drawer cabinet at the top for tucking away things used less frequently (like your ski cap or small set of bagpipes). The center tower swaps out the drawers for two slide-out trash cans.

Now, I know you need a trash can in a bedroom—but four of them!

"They're the clothes hamper, Mark," Theresa pointed out.

Sheeee-yaaa…like I needed that explained to me.

STANLEY
FatMax

Find the highest spot in the floor where the cabinets will sit, then register your level line. The longer the level, the easier it is to get an accurate mark.

Find your plumb line next, then, if necessary, install a backer for your filler piece. The filler/backer gives the door enough room to swing and stay open.

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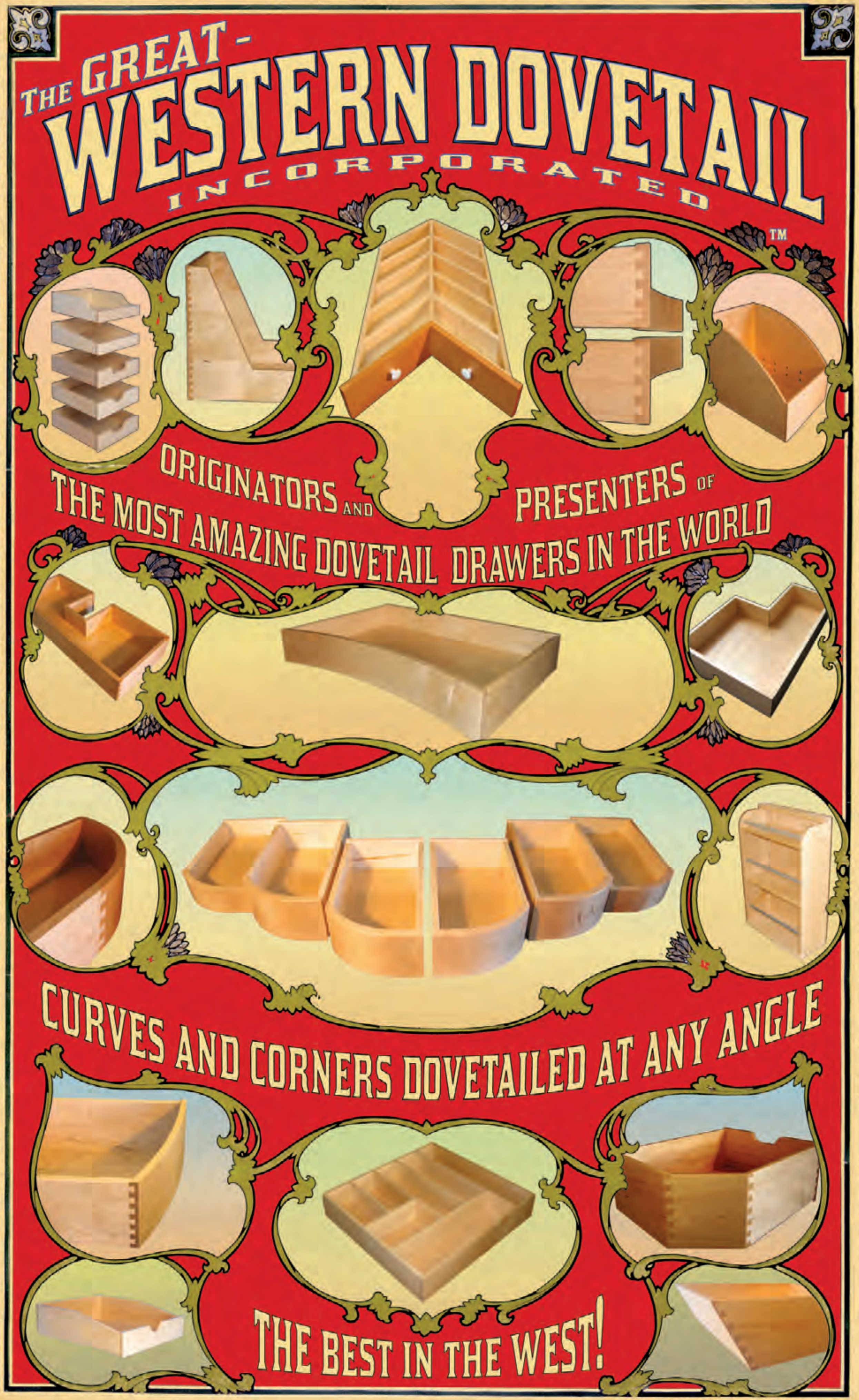
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DOVETAIL DRAWERS

Theresa really worked—without overworking—the details. Inside the drawers she used silverware organizers as valets to separate little things like watches, wallets, change, and so forth. Each drawer base has toe-kick drawers which are awesome, again, for lesser used things. And she even re-invented a wine storage rack as vertical shoe storage for flat shoes, scarves, and other things more commonly found in a lady's closet.

INSTALLATION

If you know the carpenter's mantra of Plumb, Level and Square, you'll be well on your way to installing the cabinet boxes right on the money. Careful layout—front-back and left-right—is crucial. These cabinet towers cover a lot of space and being out of plumb or just a hair off a layout line can create gaps or other problems as you install.

Layout. Because we were working in an old house, the floor wasn't just out of level, it made a crumpled-up bath towel thrown in a corner look straight. So the boxes would stand straight and tall, we struck a level line first. Plumb lines come next.

Shimming up. It'll be good news if all you have to do is tuck a few shims here and there to keep yourself riding smooth on your layout lines. If you're doing the old house shuffle, however, be ready with full pieces of 1-by for the cabinet bases to bear on, which is what we needed.

Studs. I like to locate the wall studs and strike a line from floor

Again, layout, level and plumb are key—especially as you get started building the towers. Check the top of the cabinet to make sure it's level.

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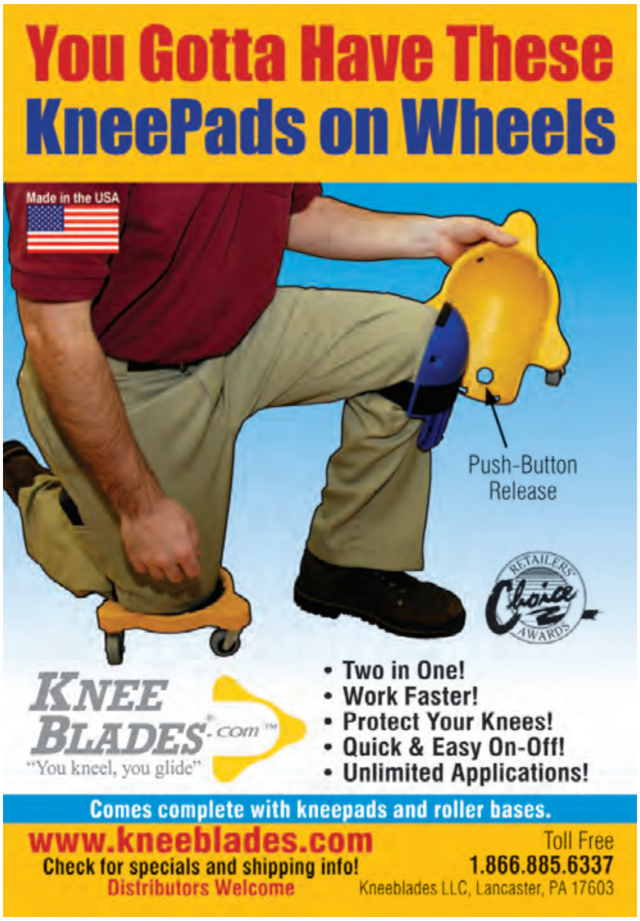

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to ceiling. This means that as I install each element of the cabinet, I can see the line clearly and don't have to re-measure to locate the studs. It's a time saver.

BUILDING THE TOWERS

We had to make a choice on this project between running all the base units across the span first, or installing each unit as a tower.

Because, at least on this site, the eye would register plumb before level, we chose getting the units plumb as our over-arching criteria. To make sure we were on course, we installed all the way up.

On the wall-mounted unit, this was no big whoop because we ran flat along the wall. But in the bank of cabinets we let into the new closet, we had to be doubly sure we ran the face of the cabinet bank straight between each wall to make sure it lined up and would seamlessly accept the molding valance above.

TOOLS

The good news is that you don't need every tool in your shop to install these cabinets. You can almost do the whole thing with a circ saw, level and

Pilot point, washer-head cabinet screws draw the back of the cabinet carcass to the wall, and the wide heads provide good bearing. Snug them, but don't over tighten.

An impact driver does the pre-drill/countersink. A cordless drill-driver drills the rest of the pilot hole. Another impact drive sends the trim-drive screws home.

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cordless drill. To make time, however, it helps to have multiple tools.

The face frames on the Thomasville cabinets are solid maple. However, when you install cabinets you fasten the face frames together by pre-drilling and sinking trim-drive screws to hold them together, so there's a lot of pre-drilling and driving.

Pre-drill and countersink the face frame. Send the screws home into the face frame—again, snug them without overdriving.

Fastening to the wall is a little easier; just use the Thomasville-provided pilot-point washer-head screws.

To get all this done without switching bits a thousand times, I used two impact drivers and a cordless drill/driver to pre-drill, countersink, then drive screws with some modicum of speed.

HARDWARE

Installing cabinet hardware takes patience to get right—and getting it right is key to a nicely trimmed package.

My Stanley 7-inch combination square—an invaluable tool to me—and tape measure helped me layout where each hole was located before I drilled them out.

Thomasville provides segmented screws that you can snap off with side cutters or nail nippers to accommodate the hardware you use. Sometimes, however, the screw length just doesn't match—always happens, it seems—so I simply counter-bore the back of the drawer with a paddle bit to recess the screw head.

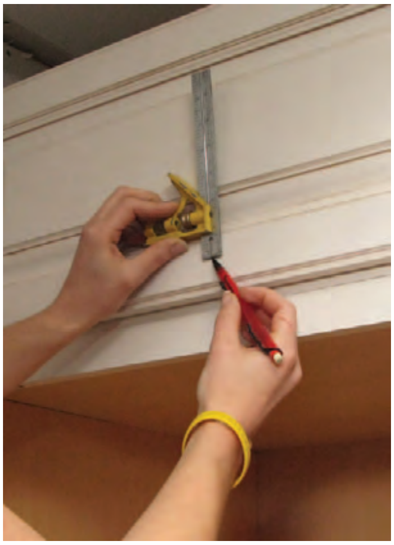
THE REST OF THE MOLDING

After the cabinets were installed, it was time to go back to trimming the place out. We started, as you're supposed to, with all the vertical moldings—casing in this case—then tied in the base.

With door casing, I find it's easier to layout the door jamb with a Bench Dog Trim-Loc. I use the bright orange marking gauge to strike my reveal lines along the head jamb and jamb legs. This creates a crosshairs at the top of the door, which I use to measure my pieces.

I then cut and pre-assemble the casing assembly on a flat surface. Next, I apply the assembly

The wall-mounted cabinet gets a factory-finished, maple plywood end cap. Finish nails hold it tight, but be certain to drive them through the cabinet carcass only—and not into the body of the cabinet. Nails and clothes don't mix.



A 7-inch combination square is an incredible layout gauge and I used it plenty when laying out the hardware holes.

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This is where there is still room for the tried-and-true screwdriver.

on the door jamb before nailing both into the wall and into the jamb. This keeps the miters nice and tight. Dabbing them with a little Phenoseal before putting them together is a belt-and-suspenders approach.

Base is next. Like the most moldings, I dead-end left and cope right.

FLOOR

I tackled the floor sanding on this project myself. I used the U-Sand vertical random orbit sander, which I rented from my local rental shop, 202 Rentals,

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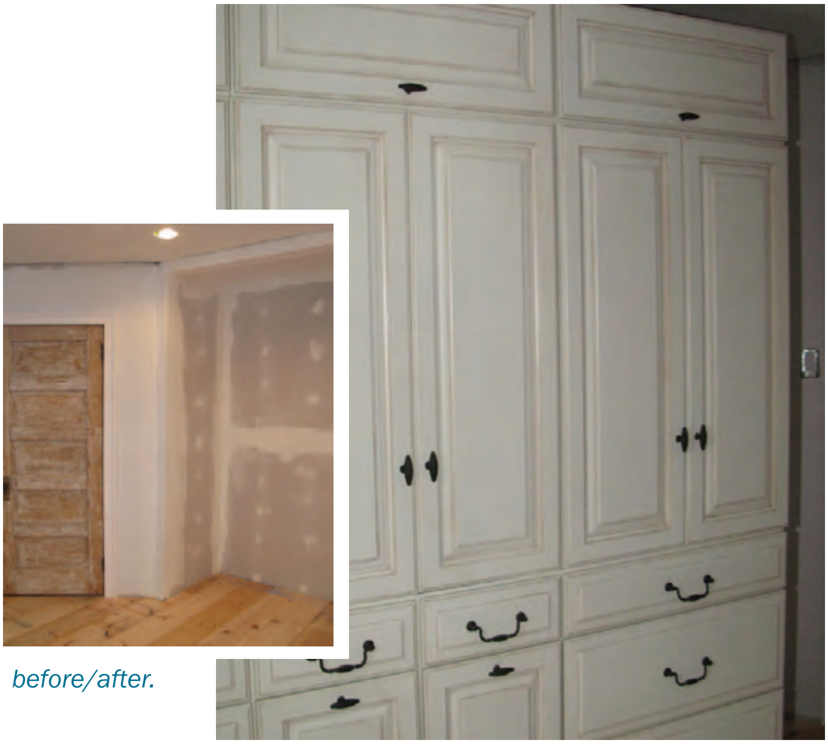

before/after.

for the soft white pine floors—it worked great. It was clean, removed stock at a good rate and left a primo finish.

I then finished the floor with four coats of Verathane's quick-dry, water-based urethane.

Last step for floors was installing the coved shoe molding, which is a small, but appreciable detail. I like it much better than your typical rounded-over shoe mold.

PAINT

A tight paint job is critical for pulling together all the disparate details of a high-impact project like this. We selected Sherwin-Williams' Duration low-VOC, low-odor paint. And because I was the painter on the project, I doubly appreciated the low-odor feature.

To keep the site clean and paint lines straight, we overpainted the moldings first, then cut in the walls and ceiling to make the new master move-in ready.

The door was a real find. The Douglas fir, five-panel door was original to the house (it had been stashed in the attic), and instead of painting it, we depainted it using an unbelievable

CLASSIC
HIGH GLOSS

We wanted a high-gloss finish on the trim, so we used Sherwin-Williams white high-gloss paint. Low VOC's are only available in flats and semis at this time, which is what we used for the walls and ceiling. And, forget a screwdriver for opening paint cans. Use a 5-in-1 tool as a lever—much easier.

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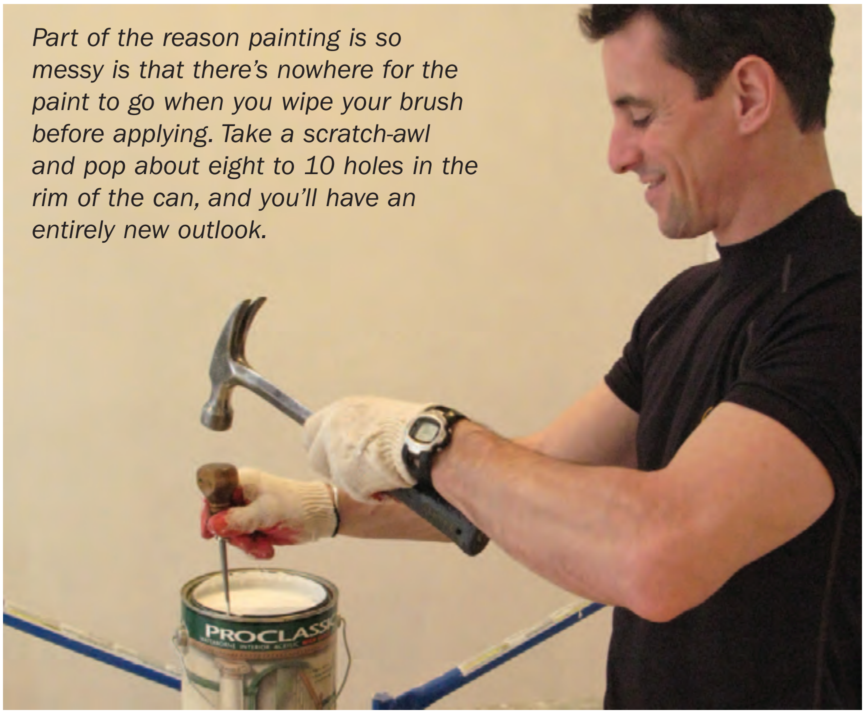
paint remover called Back to Nature Multi-Strip Pro. This is a low-tox product, but it ate through layer after layer of paint and varnish.

Once I scraped the muck off the door and it dried, I sanded it smooth with 100-grit paper using my Festool 6-inch random orbit sander. I then took the door into the shop and hit it with a high-gloss urethane. It came out luscious.

Matching the century-old hardware was a snap, though I don't expect it to be that easy in other parts of the country. Home Depot had replacement lock sets that were identical to what was on the door originally, although I sanded, primed and painted them. This changed the brass finish to a



Part of the reason painting is so messy is that there's nowhere for the paint to go when you wipe your brush before applying. Take a scratch-awl and pop about eight to 10 holes in the rim of the can, and you'll have an entirely new outlook.

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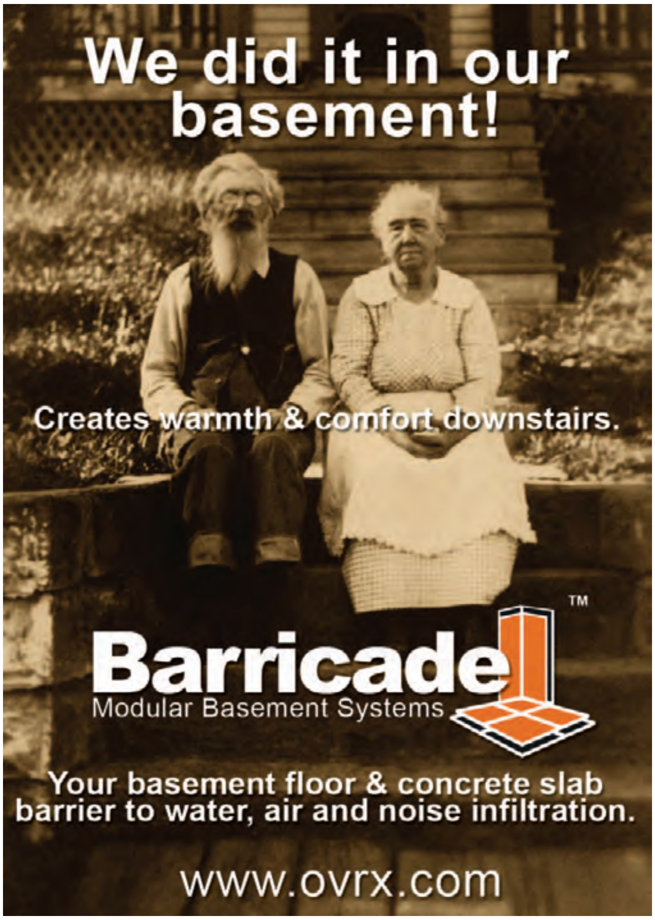

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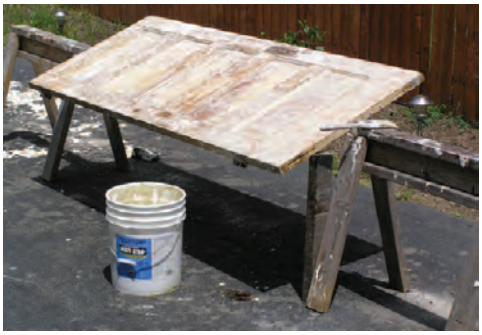
gloss black, which looks much more substantial.

The last step is for the homeowner to load their cabinets and appreciate their beautiful new master bedroom. EHT

Editor's Note: *Theresa Coleman is a designer and author of* The Ultimate Guide to Built-Ins*. Mark Clement is a remodeler and author of* The Carpenters' Notebook, A Novel*. www.FormalFarmHouse.com.*

Some areas, like our radius drywall window returns, just aren't roller friendly. We brushed them out.



I jigged up the door so I could apply paint stripper goop (Back to Nature Multi-Strip Pro) to both sides. I placed a few screws in the bottom trestle, resting them between sawhorses. This enabled me to simply rotate it over when I was finished painting one side.

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CREATING A

WORKSHOP

For your home project headquarters, organization is the key to success.

By Matt Weber

While a garage is nice, I like a workshop even better. And by "workshop," I'm referring to a garage or outbuilding that's a little more dressed up in regard to tool storage and organization. I consider a garage a workshop once it has a variety of shelves, tool racks and work surfaces arranged in some sort of logical order. The place doesn't have to be meticulous, but with home-improvement projects an organized workshop paves the way for greater productivity and less time spent searching for tools. Here's how we dressed up a freestanding garage into a home-improvement workshop.

WALL PREP

When converting the freestanding 24-by-24-square-foot garage shown in this article, we were fortunate to begin with a strong foundation. The garage was built on a concrete slab, framed with studs on 24-inch centers and sheathed in metal siding and roofing. The front wall features two automatic garage doors. We swept away the dirt and insect nests from the floor and rafters and then focused on the remaining three walls.

The *EHT* staff plans to use this workshop extensively throughout the summer and winter, and since we had easy access to the open stud cavities we decided to add fiberglass insulation batts. We used the mold- and mildew-resistant variety, because it never hurts to be too careful. The batts are pre-sized to fit between the 24 o.c. studs, so installation was as simple as stapling the paper nailing flanges on each side of the batt approximately every 8 inches to the inside of the studs. Nailing the 1-inch flange to the inside of the studs, as opposed to the face, creates an air gap that aids insulation, and it helps to avoid nail pops when installing any sort of wallboard. A cordless electric nailer from Arrow Fastener Company greatly quickened our pace when stapling the batts (www.arrowfastener.com).

Before: Garage with bare studs

Occasionally we cut extra strips of insulation to fill gaps at the bottom of the framing. When cutting, place the batt over plywood, compress the insulation and use a long razor knife to slice the material in a single stroke. A T-square makes a good cutting guide. Always wear gloves, eye protection and a dust mask when working with fiberglass.

Ultimately we were planning to add a slat-wall storage system with adjustable shelves and tool holders. However, to avoid deflection in the slat-wall panels, we first installed 1/4-inch plywood panels over the studs. The panels were installed with 1-1/4-inch drywall screws roughly every 16 inches. You can saw the panels to size so they break on stud centers, providing a solid fastening surface behind the panel edges. Or you can add blocking between the studs to create a solid nailing surface when the panel edges extend beyond the studs.

Use a utility knife to cut out electrical boxes

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A big help when fastening the plywood came from Hitachi's new WH10DL 10.8V Lithium Ion Impact Driver. This powerful miniature driver provides 930 inch/pounds of torque, which makes it ideal for heavy-duty jobs that require lots of power. It easily outperformed my 18-volt drill/driver when driving the many drywall screws. At only 2 pounds and 5-1/2 inches, the mini driver is easy to lift for overhead work and fits easily into a tool belt. It gets into tight work spaces and features an LED to illuminate dim areas.

Another help came from my good friend, Mitch. I put up half the panels alone, but the work sped up dramatically once I convinced a buddy to help me lift and install them.

I used a chalk box as a plumb line to locate the stud locations when fastening the plywood panels. A T-square also works well.

SLAT-WALL SYSTEM

The wall-mounted storage system we chose is called the Flow Wall System, a fully integrated and expandable slat-wall system that combines a large assortment of storage devices and accessories (www.flowwall.com). Available in 1-by-4- and 1-by-8-foot sizes, the panels are strong and durable, and easy to install. The available accessories include

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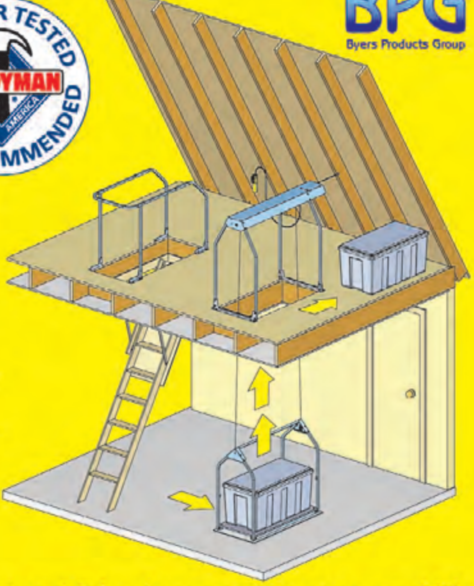

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The installation of the 1/4" plywood panels serves to eliminate deflection on the wall-storage panels.

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application-specific hooks, shelves, bins and cabinets that attach to the Flow Wall panels with a simple click-together system that requires no tools. Also available are strap attachments for storing cords and hoses. The mounting plates of each accessory can be moved and rearranged at any time.

To install the wall system, begin with a clean wall and use a stud finder to locate and mark the studs. Level and fasten a scrap piece of wood to the wall just below the position of your first panel. Rest your first panel on top of the scrap board serving as your guide, and drive your first installation screw through the slat-wall panel and into the stud behind it. Use a T-square to map out the stud locations on the panels. Work your way up and across the studs, fastening the panels between the slats.

To extend the wall vertically, just align the next Flow Wall panel above or below the first, pressing it evenly for a seamless connection, and then screw down the panel securely.

To extend the wall horizontally, insert the provided nylon pin connectors into the pin slots on the side of the panel. Gently push the panels together so the pins slide into the slots on both pan-

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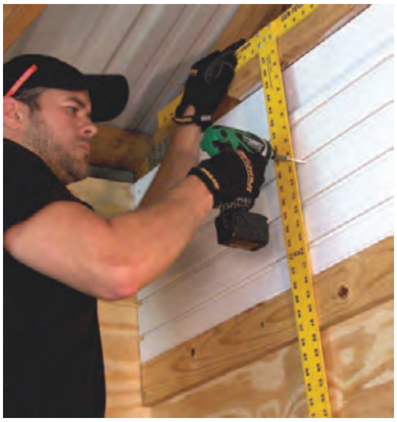
els. Then simply fasten the new panel to the wall.

To cut the panels to size, we used a table saw fitted with a fine-tooth blade, and used an outfeed roller to support the work. However, you can also use a handheld circular saw, but to do so you should support the panels from below to prevent deflection when cutting, and use a straight-edge guide to keep the cut in line.



Drive screws through the panels and into the wall studs.

For this workshop, we covered the rear wall extensively with the Flow Wall System, and then ran a couple of tracks along each side wall. Available in three colors, white, maple and silver, the number and orientation of the storage panels is totally up to the homeowner and can be easily rearranged. The same goes for the many storage accessories, from wire shelves to ladder racks. Our staff fell in love with the Flow Wall System.

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CLICK-TOGETHER FLOOR TILE

To add some much needed décor to the lifeless concrete slab floor, we covered it with a click-together tile system available from our friends at JNK Products (www.jnkproducts.com). JNK distributes a variety of garage floor tiles and storage systems available in a wide array of colors and styles. We chose the heavy-duty 13-inch tiles, which has five interlocking tabs where each tile joins the other tiles. The floor system is easy to install and creates an attractive, non-slip, solid surface with a 12-year warranty—and it's guaranteed not to stain.

To install the garage floor, snap a few square layout lines on the floor to guide the installation. After the tiles have been conditioned to room temperature, start in a corner and place the "smooth" edges toward the wall. Place the next tile against the locking edge, interlocking the pegs under the second tile with the loops on the edge of the first. Continue working in one direction until the first three rows are complete. Then install the next three rows along the adjacent wall to the first. Install the interlocking edging along the first wall, then continue working along the rows, installing the field of the floor.

When installing the floor, leave an expansion gap of at least 1/4 inch between all walls and obstacles such as beams. You'll need to account for this expansion, as well as the width of the edging, when laying out your first rows.

Sadly, the garage tiles didn't arrive in time for our photo shoot, but keep your eyes peeled for a spotlight on this product in a future issue of *Extreme How-To*.

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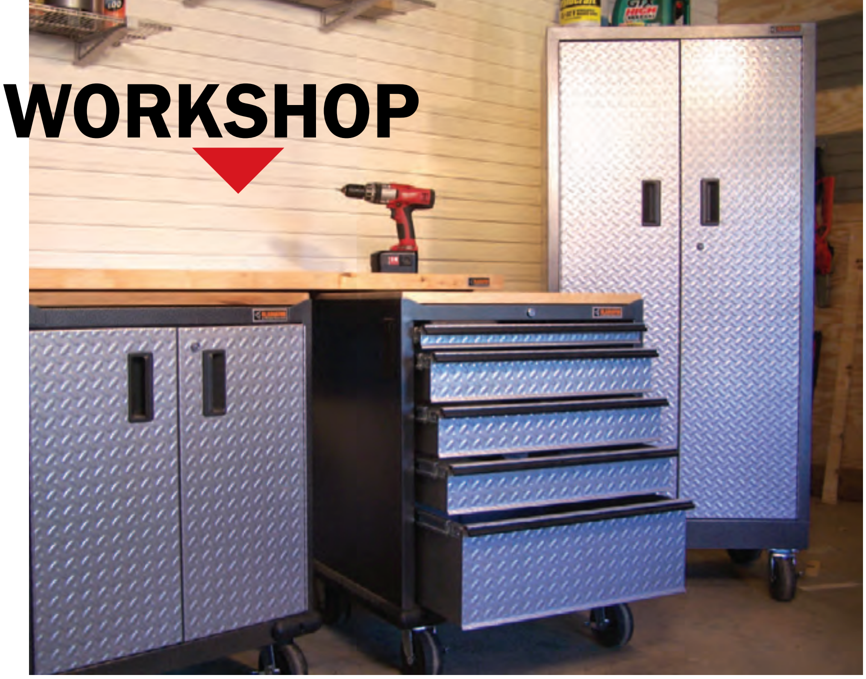

SHELVES & BENCHES

Another nice amenity to this workshop is the Gladiator workbench and set of cabinets available from Whirlpool (www.gladiatorgw.com). The Gladiator products are a complete line of garage storage items that range from wall and floor systems to cabinets and more. For this project we used the modular GearBox, the GearDrawer and the tall GearLocker. The GearBox has a full-extension adjustable shelf for larger items. The GearDrawer has five full-extension drawers for smaller items. Both the GearBox and GearDrawer feature butcher-block maple tops and large casters. Each storage unit rolls conveniently beneath the Gladiator 8-foot modular maple-topped workbench, which is strong enough to support 1,000 pounds. The Gearlocker is 66 inches high, with one fixed and two adjustable shelves. Each of the Gladiator storage components features locking tread-plate drawers and heavy-duty welded construction. Gladiator GarageWorks is a top-notch product line for all manner of workshops, from woodcraft to automotive work.

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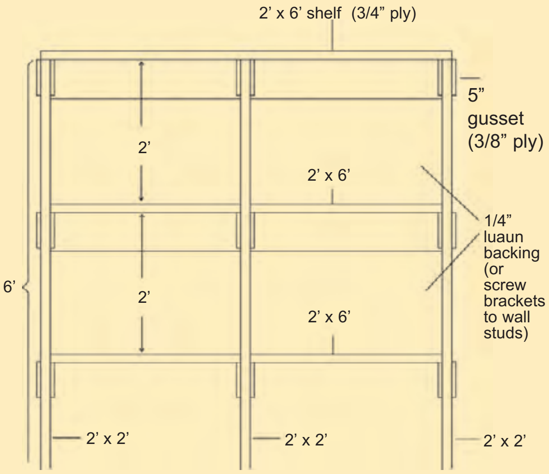
DIY SHELVES & BENCHES

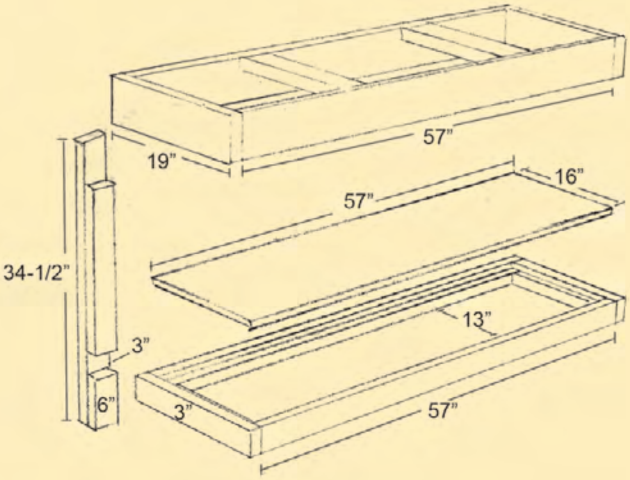
While purchased cabinets and shelves are nice, a more economical way to outfit your shop with storage space is to build shelving from lumber. Doing so, you'll almost always save in material costs, and you can customize the dimensions and shelf configuration to suit your specific requirements. Two recent items I constructed include a large three-shelf tool storage unit and a sturdy workbench.

Triple-decker Storage: For the utility shelves, the three plywood shelves are supported by ladder brackets. Each bracket is constructed of two 2-by-2 legs bridged by three 2-foot-long 2-by-2 cross-braces. I spaced the cross-braces of the brackets 2 feet apart. I assembled the brackets by using a combination of Gorilla Glue and wood screws to anchor triangular gussets at each intersection of the cross-braces. Use a square to make sure you're assembling the brackets at right angles. And measure between each cross-brace on each leg to ensure the braces are evenly spaced. These braces support the shelves, and if they aren't square and equally spaced, the plywood shelves won't sit flat.

You can strengthen the shelves' stability by driving 3-inch screws through the 2-by-2 brackets and mounting them to wall studs, then adding the shelves. Or, for freestanding shelves, screw 1/4-inch luaun backing onto the legs at the rear of the two lower shelves. This will square up the shelves, adding stability and preventing small tools from rolling off the rear of the shelves.

Beefy Workbench: This workbench is constructed from 2-by-6's, 2-by-4's and 2-by-2's. I first ripped the rounded edges off the lumber, so each 2-by-4 measured 3 inches, and each 2-by-6 measured 5 inches. Then I assembled it according to the diagram, sizing the height for a 6-foot tall person to work comfortably, but you can adjust the height of your bench accordingly. I used 2-1/2-inch No. 8 wood screws when nailing through 2-by lumber into the face of another 2-by board. However, I used 3-inch screws when nailing through 2-by lumber and into the end of a board. Make the bottom shelf by cutting your sheet material of choice to fit flush into the lower frame, and fasten with 1-5/8-inch wood screws. The sturdy top is nothing more than a solid-core door I picked up at Lowe's, centered on the table frame and screwed to the brackets from beneath.





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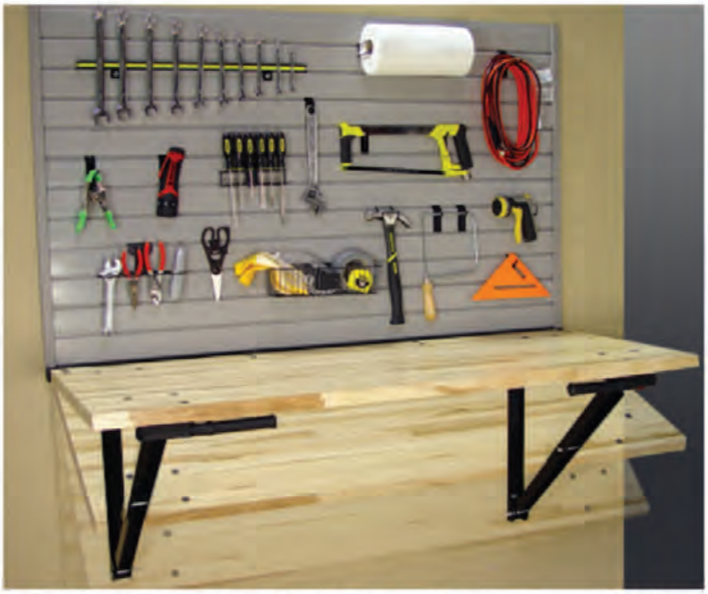

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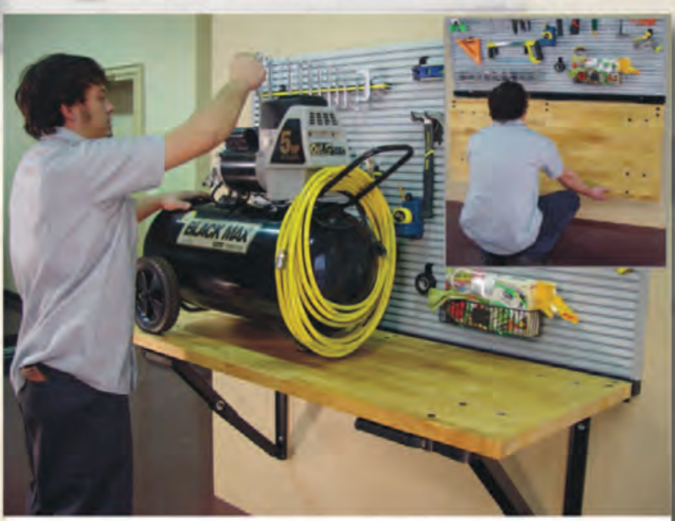

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Crown Molding in Review

Coping inside corners conceals gaping joints.

By Matt Weber

Crown molding can add greatly to a room's overall décor, especially when it's installed correctly. But a molding installation with gaping corner joints only adds as much style as a ragged fedora. Although precision cutting and gluing inside miters can help the joint stick, the expansion and contraction of the molding material is a powerful force. Nine times out of ten, miter joints will open. To prevent this, many carpenters bypass cutting miters on inside corners in favor of coped joints. A coped piece of molding has the end "carved" in the shape of the molding profile so it fits over the intersecting strip of molding like a puzzle piece. Coping the joints hides the problem of inside corners that tend to spread open.

PLANNING

Fortunately, with ceiling trim there are generally no doors or other room openings with which to contend. This simplifies the layout somewhat, but you should plan the layout according to the locations of the coped joints.

In a basic square-room installation, the first piece of crown should be installed on the wall opposite the door with two square-cut ends butted tightly to the adjacent wall surfaces. Then install the adjacent pieces of molding, each having one coped end that nests against the square-cut first piece, while the other end is cut square to butt against the opposite wall. This means that as someone walks into the room, they are presented with the best face of the crown joints on the opposite side of the room. The final run of molding will have two coped ends, but these are at the least noticeable locations in the room.

First step is to mark the framing locations on the wall and ceiling.

Before installing the first piece, use a stud finder and pencil to mark the wall studs and ceiling joists around the perimeter of the room. Mark just outside the molding location so you'll know where to drive the nails.

FIRST RUN

Requiring no angled cuts, the first piece of molding is the easiest to install. Simply make a 90-degree cut to trim the molding to length, using a powered miter saw or handsaw and miter box.

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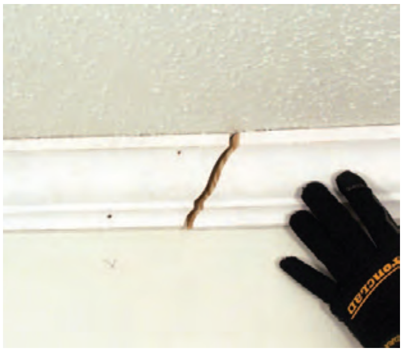
Use finish nails to fasten through the molding and into the wall and ceiling framing. A hammer and nail set will suffice, but be careful not to bang up the molding profile. A better tool for the job is a pneumatic nail gun, such as the Paslode 16-gauge angled finish nailer shown, which frees up one of your hands, affords greater nailing precision and really picks up the pace of the installation.

A pneumatic nailer can speed the fastening process.

LEARNING TO COPE

The intersecting ends of the next two adjacent molding strips is where you'll begin the coping operation. The idea is for the intersecting cut to duplicate the molding profile, or shape, so it nests tightly against the face of the adjoining molding for a nearly perfect fit.

Measure the wall and mark your measurement onto the intersecting end of the second piece of molding. Cut a 45-degree inside miter at the mark. Remember, when cutting crown molding on a miter saw, you typically have to cut it upside-down and backwards, so the saw's base represents the ceiling and



Cut scarf joints to join straight pieces of molding in a continuous run.

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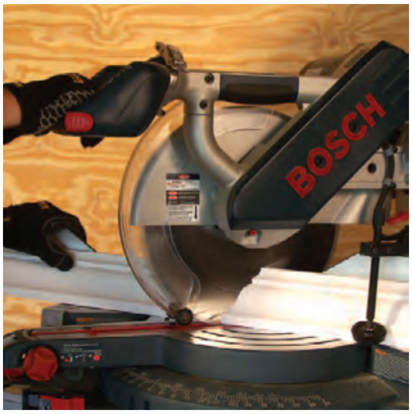


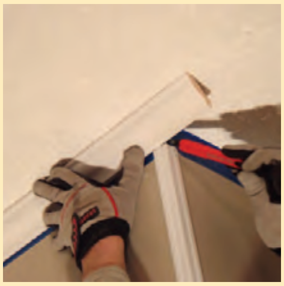
Position the molding upside-down and backwards when cutting on a miter saw.

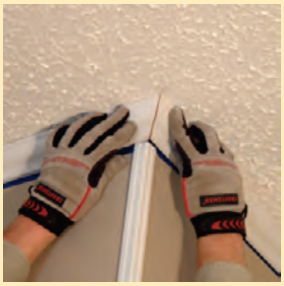
the saw's fence represents the house wall. With 45-degree inside corners, the cut should be made so the lower, longer point of the molding (when positioned on the wall) meets the mark you made for the molding strip's overall length. (See the "Crown 45" sidebar for a handy tool that simplifies this cutting process).

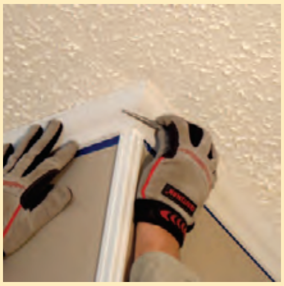
Next, run a pencil along the mitered edge, marking the edges and curves of the profile for better visibility. Clamp the molding securely and use a coping saw to back-cut along the pencil line, following the contours of the profile. Keep the blade 1/16 inch to the waste side of the cutline. Then use a file to clean up the profile, revealing a shaped edge that will be the only point of contact between the intersecting molding

When making a cope joint, begin by tracing the molding profile with a pencil for better visibility.

INSTALLING OUTSIDE CROWN CORNERS







To install molding at an outside corner, first cope the end of the molding opposite the outside corner. Hold that strip along the wall, nesting the cope against the preceding piece, letting the other end run long over the corner.

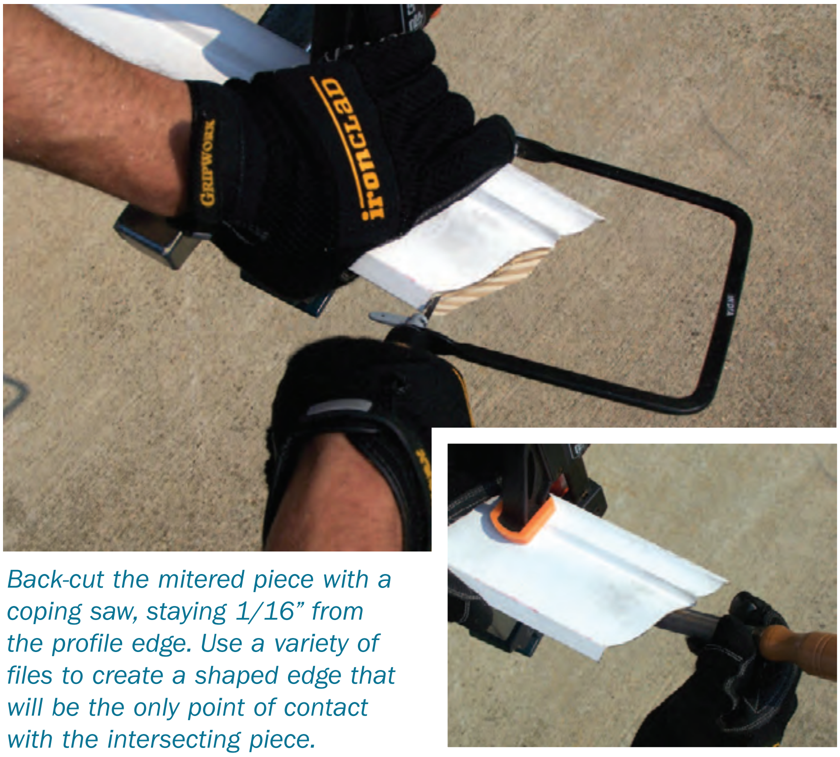
Mark the cutline where the molding overhangs the corner. Do the same for the adjoining piece. Then make a miter cut at that mark.

For outside corners on crown molding, position the molding upside down and face up on the miter saw (or miter box). In other words, place the molding so its ceiling-side will be flat against the bottom of the base, and its wall-side will be flat against the vertical back fence. Ideally you will need to make a 45-degree cut on one end of one piece, and another 45 on the intersecting piece. However, walls are often out of square, so first check the angle with an angle gauge and cut accordingly.

Install the pieces by applying a bead of carpenter's glue to the joint and securing with finish nails. You can then smooth the joint by running the rounded edge of a nail set over it to press the fibers closed. For thick, heavy moldings or problem gaps, drill pilot holes at the top and bottom of the joint, and drive 4d finish nails perpendicular through one molding into the end of the other.

EASY NO-NAIL CROWN MOLDING

Easy Crown Molding from EZAPEEL provides a simpler way to install crown to enhance a room's décor. It takes the guesswork out of the installation process and allows DIY'ers the ability to trim out a 17-by-17-foot room for just $49.95. Unlike wood or composite molding, the material can be cut with household scissors. And instead of using nails, installation is a simple peel-and-stick procedure in which the installer removes tape from the molding to reveal an adhesive backing. Each kit contains 16 pieces just over 4 feet long, which are pre-mitered for easy corners. Just press the molding tightly to the wall and ceiling to adhere it in place, overlapping the seams at each joint. No measuring is necessary. The molding can be painted and caulked after installation. Also, check out the company's Easy Door Crown system. Visit www.ezapeel.com or call 1-888-EZAPEEL.



Back-cut the mitered piece with a coping saw, staying 1/16" from the profile edge. Use a variety of files to create a shaped edge that will be the only point of contact with the intersecting piece.

pieces. This should create a socket that fits snugly over the face of the first piece. After checking for fit on the wall, cut the uncoped end square and butt it against the far corner to meet another coped piece on the third wall. Repeat this process for the molding strip that intersects the first piece on the opposite wall.

SCARFING

The final molding strip on the fourth wall, above the door, is coped at both ends. Admittedly, it is difficult to successfully fit a piece of molding that is coped at both ends—even for a pro. To make this easier, you can fit each coped corner on a separate piece of molding and cut a scarf joint to join the two

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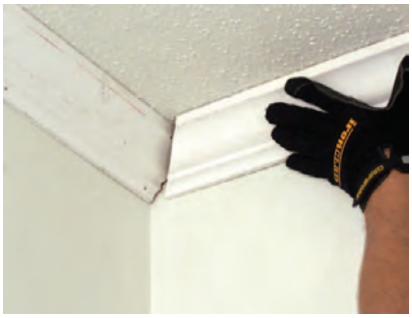
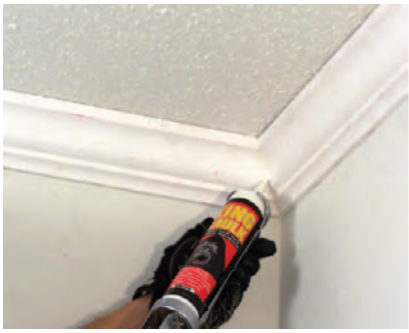
pieces in a continuous run. In fact, use a scarf joint anytime you need to join two pieces of molding along a straight run of the wall. To make a scarf joint, cut opposite miters on the two molding pieces and nail the joint securely over a wall stud. After fastening the first half of the run over the stud, cope the corner end of the second half and then cut a supplementary miter, making the strip just a little too long. Test-fit this last piece and then cut way the excess on the miter until it fits snugly into the scarf joint with no visible gap.

FINISHING

With the molding solidly fastened in place, fill the nail holes and seal seams with a high-quality caulk or wood filler. The molding used in this material was pre-primed pine. If you're painting the molding, it improves paint adhesion to sand the caulk



The coped piece of molding should nest perfectly against the square-cut first piece. Fasten securely and then seal all seams with caulk.



PRO TIPS ON BUILT-UP CROWN MOLDING

BY MARK CLEMENT

To say that I love crown molding would be elevating the practice of understatement from intramural volleyball to pro football. To me, there's no reason to have a room if you're not going to have crown in it. And a custom crown is even better.

To get just the look we wanted for a recent room remodel, we used the simple trick of combining base moldings as backers for a coved, Greek-Revival style crown.

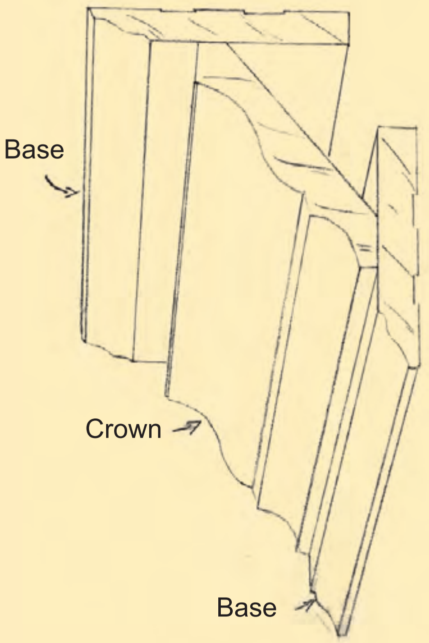
As with any multi-layered trim installation, you start with layout, then do laps of the room until all the pieces are set. To that end I made a mock-up of the crown assembly and used it to strike lines at all the corners. This keeps reveals as even as possible.

Layer 1 is a 3-1/2-inch ogee base set upside down. I installed it using my favorite trim installation method: Dead-end left; cope right. And because I registered all my layout marks off the pattern-assembly, I can trust that if I'm very close to them on final installation, my reveals will be what I want them to be as the molding is installed live.

Layer 2, which lays flat on the ceiling, is a repeat of Layer 1 except all the joints are mitered.

With the third layer, the coved crown ties it all together.

I usually cope inside corners on crown installations. It's faster and more accurate than mitering. And if you're reading this and saying "no way is it easier" trust me, it is. It takes a little practice and know-how to get out of the blocks, but once you're running, you can run faster and farther. But some crowns can't be coped and this was the case here. So I very carefully mitered my corners—shimmed them flush once hanging on the wall—and they worked out great.



Normally I'd wait until all the trim was installed to caulk and fill, but because one of the built-ins in this particluar room was more like a built-*on* (we fastened it right to the wall), it would be in the way, so doing it in advance saves time.

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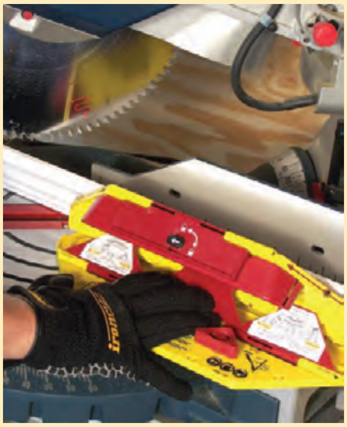
after it dries and to "spot" prime the seams and nail patches. Once the primer dries, simply mask off the molding and finish up with a couple of coats of you're favorite interior paint—we recommend using the high-gloss variety. **EHT**

Editor's Note: *Thanks to Lowe's Home Improvement Store for supporting this article. Visit www.lowes.com.*

CROWN 45 JIG MAKES INSTALLATION EASIER



The whole process of thinking "upside-down and backwards" when cutting crown molding can be incredibly confusing. Most likely, you'll make a mistake when cutting, and those mistakes not only waste molding but also time. Fortunately, the *EHT* staff discovered a new jig for the miter saw that allows installers to cut crown molding upright, just like it installs on the wall. The new "right side up" cutting orientation of Milescraft's new Crown 45 jig greatly simplifies crown molding installation. It features an adjustable angle setting with accessory angle finders to find and set the appropriate spring angle for the most common molding styles (38, 45 and 52 degrees). There's also an indented cutting face to accommodate detailed dentil-style molding. The wide cutting surface can handle moldings between 2 and 5-1/2 inches, and the jig collapses for compact, easy storage. For more information, visit www.milescraft.com

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HOT PRODUCTS

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Here's a great solution for touching up wrought iron railings, light fixtures, mailboxes or other surfaces where a high-gloss black finish is desired. Metal Wizard, a new oil-based coating from Ze-VO Products Group, comes in a handy 4-ounce container with a leak-proof sponge applicator that works like a shoe-polish bottle. Simply remove loose rust and flaking paint from your surface, then dab on Metal Wizard. You'll have a revitalized surface with natural rust protection. Metal Wizard works on both metal and wood, but is not recommended for galvanized metal. Low-VOC's make this an environment-friendly solution. Visit www.ze-vo.com for details.

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NEXT-GENERATION SANDING EQUIPMENT

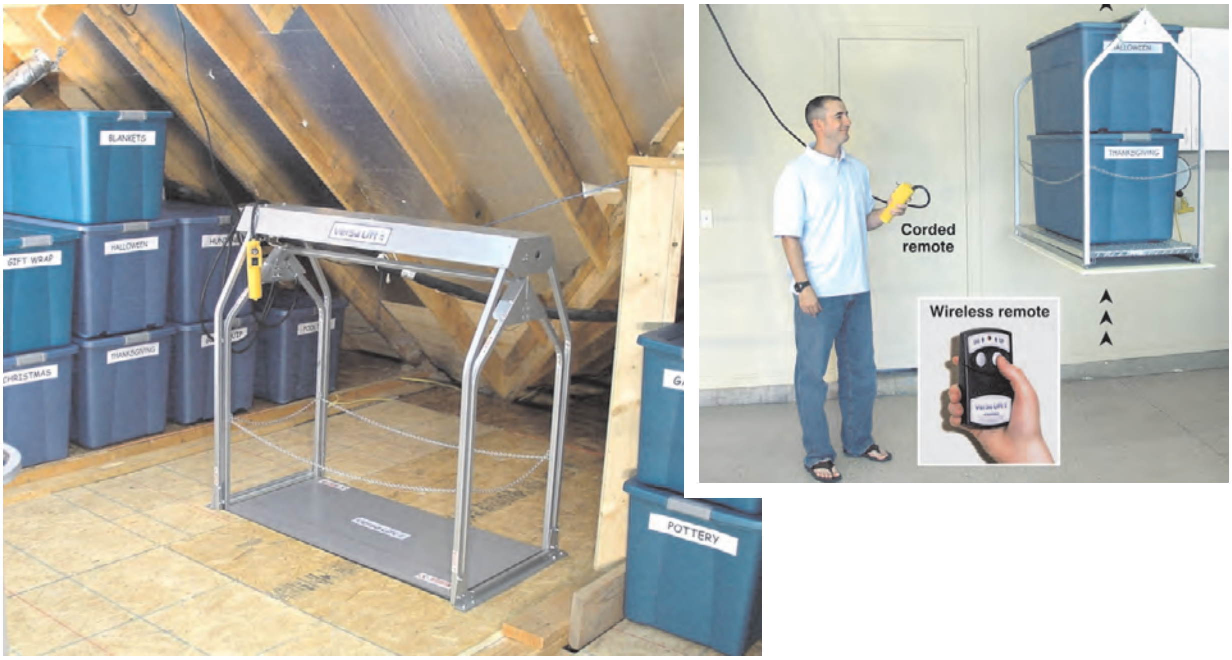
Red Devil, Inc. announces the new Sandfast generation of sanding tools that uses an easy-to-apply adhesive sandpaper, with no nuts, bolts or clips needed to fasten it. The abrasive Peel, Stick & Sand System sandpaper can be stored and reused several times. The sandpaper is easy to replace and has a strong bond, allowing no movement while sanding. And, the sheets do not wrap around the tool, they only sand the intended area, including corners and right angles. The Sandfast Peel, Stick and Sand System is the hassle-free way to apply sandpaper for use on wood, metal, plaster, drywall, painted surfaces and plastic. In sizes to fit each tool, the sanding sheets are available in 80,100,150, 180, 220 grit sandpaper. Several of the Sandfast sanding tools come with three sheets of the Peel, Stick & Sand System sandpaper. Replacement sheets are sold separately. The tool line includes hand sander, palm sander, pole sander and detail sanders. For more information, call 1-800-4A-DEVIL or visit www.reddevil.com.

CAULK SINGLES

Momentive Performance Materials' latest innovation, GE Caulk Singles, single-use disposable packages of caulk, reinvents the caulking experience by putting an end to caulk guns and hard-to-use squeeze tubes. With its deceptively simple packaging, Caulk Singles dispense effortlessly with one hand, require no tools, and leave essentially no waste in the package. With Caulk Singles, caulking becomes an effortless, quick fix instead of a long, messy task. Refresh the bathroom or kitchen in minutes by sprucing up tubs and sinks for a clean appearance. Caulk around crown molding and baseboards before painting. Caulk Singles use geometric bellows and other hidden mechanisms to make it easier to dispense the caulk with one hand. The single-use packages also reduce waste by evenly dispensing the caulk from the back to the front of the package, creating an even, neat bead of caulk despite changes in pressure. For more information, visit www.gecaulksingles.com.

VERSA LIFT FOR ATTIC STORAGE

Byers Products Group offers the new Versa Lift attic storage lift with wireless remote control. Versa Lift rapidly lifts loads of up to 200 pounds of valuable storage items, tools and other supplies up into the attic in 15 seconds. Versa Lift offers homeowners an excellent way to easily access all the storage space in the attic without the dread or danger associated with carrying heavy items up or down shaky attic ladders. Homeowners and businesses everywhere can regain valuable floor space, closet space, garage and office space by using the Versa Lift to transport all those storage boxes and tubs, carpet cleaners, sprayers, camping and hunting gear, lawn tools and luggage. For more details, visit www.bpghome.com.



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Dean Johnson, host of TV's long-running home improvement show, *Hometime*

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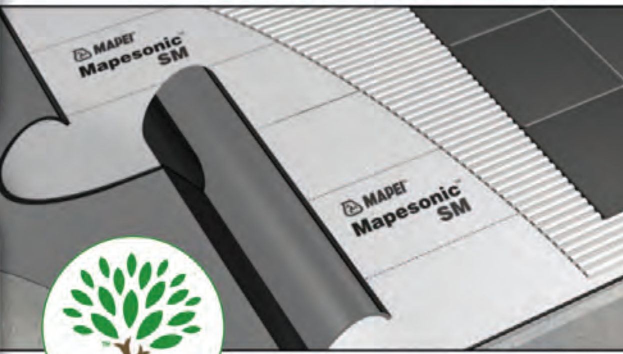

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